NEWCOMERS IN AMERICAN FICTION

Saturday Review of Literature

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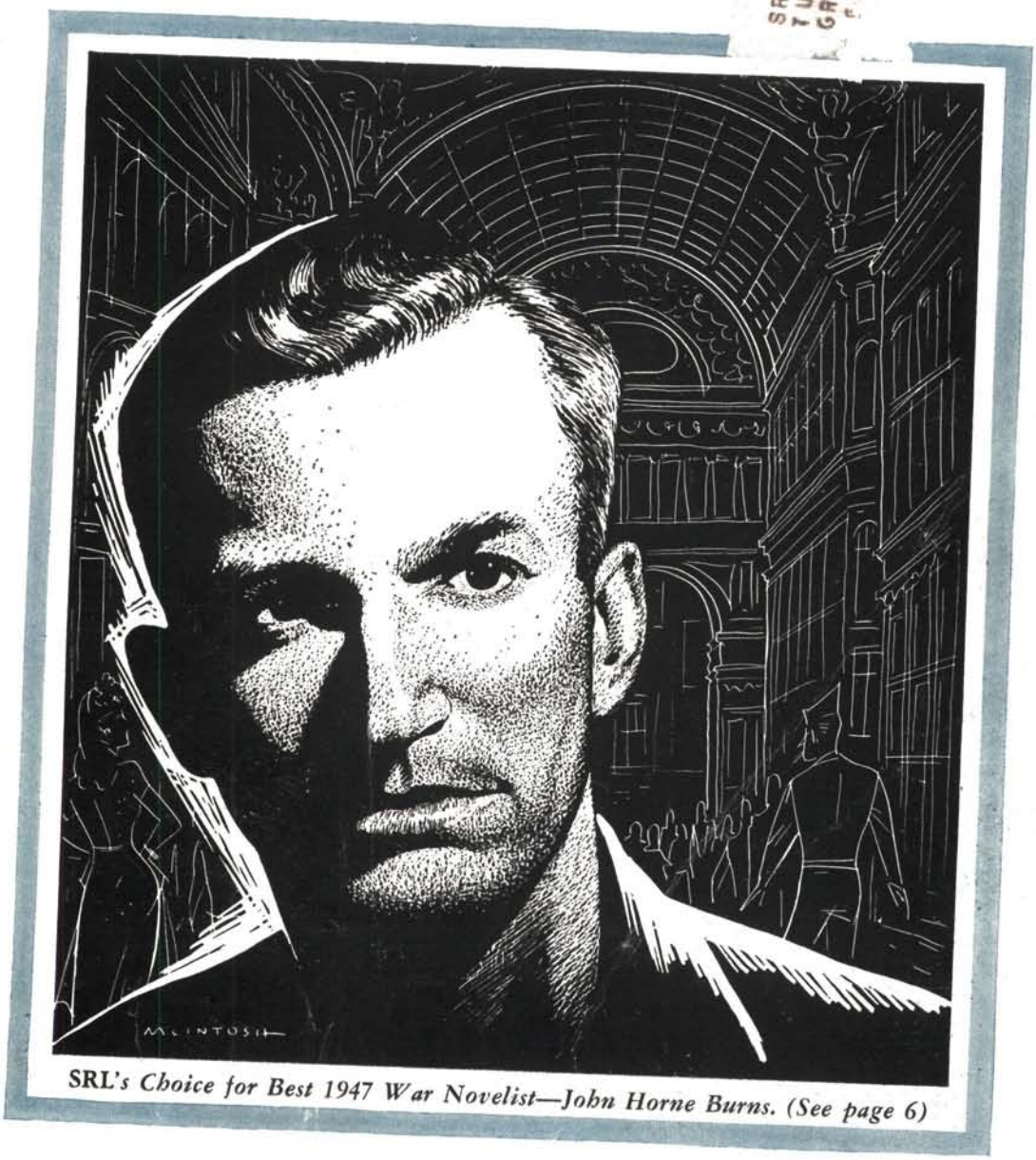

SRL's *Choice for Best 1947 War Novelist—John Horne Burns.* *(See page 6)*

Thirteen Adventurers

By HARRISON SMITH

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• **If our democracy is to prevail,** it is time for an aroused citizenry to face the deplorable situation in our educational system. The United States spends about 1.5 per cent of the national income for its schools (in contrast to 6 per cent for liquor and tobacco) while Britain spends over twice as much and the Soviet Union even more.

• **How can young men and women be attracted to the teaching profession** and our children be assured of competent instruction?

• **Some progress** has been made in increasing teachers' salaries (200,000 teachers received less than $25 a week until recently), however living costs have soared and other jobs pay higher salaries. Many school buildings the country over are in a dilapidated condition; classrooms are overcrowded; there is a shortage of textbooks and equipment; teachers are overworked and must put up with many restrictions.

• **And all this in the face of increasing enrollments.** (In 1947, the first crop of war babies increased first grade enrollment by 9 per cent and greater increases will come in the next few years).

Surely it is time for the citizens to act.

What can you do?

• **Check on conditions** in your local schools. Back up and work with the organizations seeking to improve teachers' working and living conditions. If no local action has been taken, start it yourself.

This is the first in a series of advertisements on the crisis in education.

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February 14, 1948

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Associates, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Harrison Smith, President; J. R. Cominsky, Executive Vice President and Treasurer; Norman Cousins, Vice President; Amy Loveman, Secretary; Lilian Grannon, Assistant Treasurer; Robert A. Low, Advertising Manager; Bert Garmise, Circulation Director; Arthur Bodenheimer, Assistant Circulation Director. Subscriptions $6 a year; $7 in Canada. Member of Audit Bureau of Circulations. Printed in U. S. Vol. XXXI, No. 7, February 14, 1948. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

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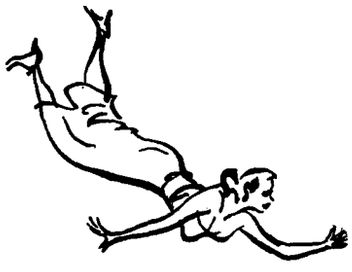

That laugh-merchant who wrote "Prophet by Experience" and "The Countess to Boot" has done it again... Fast, gay, witty and ribald, his novel revolves around the firm of *Bunbury* (just a name on a closet door) *and Blake* (junior—and working!—partner). Young Blake has a brilliant idea to revive the sales of a famous preparation for the hair—and in no time he gets mixed up with a teetotaling tycoon and his beautiful daughter . . . and finds his interest veering from hair to heiress.

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MORROW

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TRADE Winds

BECAUSE I ALWAYS get a kick out of watching true devotees ride their own particular hobby horses, I was deeply pleased when Bill Hall invited me to the annual conclave, anything but solemn, of the Baker Street Irregulars. This distinguished group, which includes such celebrities as Edgar W. Smith, Chris Morley, Elmer Davis, Rex Stout, Fred Dannay, Fletcher Pratt, Anthony Boucher, Vincent Starrett, and Ben Abramson, dedicates itself to the belief that Sherlock Holmes was a real person, and A. Conan Doyle merely his literary agent—a theory that the Doyle estate finds thoroughly distasteful. There exist fifty-six short stories and four novels about Sherlock Holmes, and originally the plan was to limit the club to one member for each story, but so many applicants clamored for admittance to the group that subsidiary chapters were authorized. Thus, I was greeted at the door by hearty gentlemen who identified themselves as "Clapp, of the Dancing Men," or "Clarkson, Gasogene, of the Six Napoleons," or "Jones, of the Scandalous Bohemians," or "Musgrave, of the Five Orange Pips." My reply, "I'm Cerf, of the *SRL*," seemed inadequate.

Dinner and the copious libations disposed of, the Baker Street Irregulars settle down to spirited discussion of various idiosyncrasies of Holmes, sweet Holmes. Rex Stout threw one meeting into an uproar by advancing the theory that Dr. Watson was a woman. Dr. Goodman averred that Holmes was afflicted with pyorrhea, and sniffed cocaine to deaden the pain. Dr. Goodman is a dentist in his spare moments. Another Irregular barely escaped decapitation for daring to suggest that the misanthropic Holmes secretly was "that way" about his landlady, Mrs. Hudson —a notion that permitted him to refer to the rape of the Sherlock. The late Mr. Woollcott drove to one meeting of the Irregulars in a dilapidated hansom cab, attired in the voluminous cloak and fore-and-aft cap that William Gillette affected in his famous stage impersonation of the intrepid sleuth. Woollcott kept them on all evening, though the temperature hovered in the eighties.

A fellow guest at the meeting I attended was Bruce Marshall, author of "Father Malachy's Miracle," "The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith," and "Vespers in Vienna." Together we blushed with ignorance while the members submitted to a quiz, in which they were challenged to identify ten of the Holmes stories from a reading of the first and last sentences thereof (Dr. Julian Wolff actually named all ten). Together we hoped we would not suffer the fate of a previous guest, Laurence Paine, who discovered when he returned home that gutter-and-yegg men had burglarized his apartment, and was afraid to tell the police where he had been. And together we perked up when Peter Gregg suggested a toast to each and every one of the solicitors who had had important dealings with Sherlock Holmes. It appears there were thirty of them. . . .

ERLE STANLEY GARDNER, in *The Atlantic Monthly,* suggests the sort of thing A. Conan Doyle might have been exposed to, had he lived long enough to fall under the domination of a high-powered Hollywood producer:

> Let's make Sherlock Holmes more human, Mr. Doyle! In the first place, he's too aloof from everybody. We've got to give him a few vices. Let him keep a bottle of rye in the bottom drawer of his desk. I see you were sort of groping around for something like this when you had him hitting the hop, but we can't do that on the screen because of the Hays office and, besides, it ain't the best angle. The best angle is hootch.—People can understand that. You don't know anybody that jabs himself with a needle, I don't know anybody that jabs himself with a needle, and the audience doesn't know anybody that jabs himself with a needle. But you know guys that hit the booze, and I know guys that hit the booze, and the audience knows guys that hit the booze.
>
> Get the idea, Mr. Doyle? . . .

STRANGE THINGS ARE happening to some of our more modern mystery headliners. Richard and Frances Lockridge, for instance, the creators of Mr. and Mrs. North, were the victims of a whimsical burglar who neglected all their real valuables, and made off only with Mr. Lockridge's oldest overcoat and page 29 of a new manuscript. And Mignon Eberhart, who saw Harry Maule cut himself in the most inconsequential manner with a bottle opener, fainted dead away. She explained upon revival, "I simply cannot bear the sight of blood." . . .

RALPH INGERSOLL HAD TO MAKE numerous phone calls to check facts while he was writing "The Great Ones" and he was mighty careful of his manners when he got the proper parties on the wire. He recalls vividly one of his last days on the newspaper *PM*. He wanted to talk to Mayor La Guardia. The operator had difficulty making the connection. Ingersoll picked up the phone finally and shouted angrily, "Confound it! Isn't that damn mayor in his office yet?" An equally angry voice replied, "Confound it, yourself! This is Mayor La Guardia speaking." . . . A five-star General was asked if he knew General MacArthur personally. "Know him!" he replied. "I studied dramatics under him for four years." . . . In the lobby of a picture theatre where a reissue

"Oh, I haven't decided what to be — atomic research, disc jockey, sky-writing, bebop. . . ."

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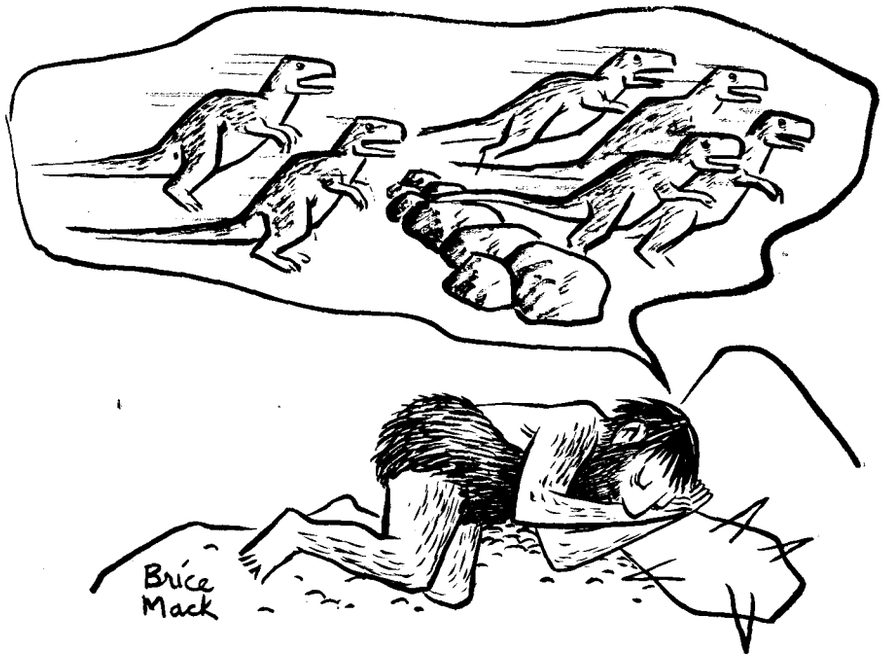

of "The Great Waltz" was being shown, somebody said, "Mozart died, you know, in 1791." "You're crazy," declared a man who had overheard the remark. "I'm Moss Hart's father —and I had dinner with him last night." . . .

A RABIES SCARE in Larchmont prompted the town fathers to decree a special inoculation for all dogs in the neighborhood. Several society debutantes volunteered assistance. One of them looked up brightly when Dave Randall, head of Scribner's rare-book department, led in his pedigreed boxer, Lord James Boswell. She opened her record book and inquired, "Name, please?" Randall answered, "Lord James Boswell." Visibly impressed, the debutante continued, "And the dog's name, m'lord?" . . . One of Randall's customers was not so impressed during the holiday rush when he gallantly remarked, "The 'new look' becomes you, Mrs. Blank. That's a fine bustle." "Sir," she replied icily, "I do not happen to be wearing a bustle." . . . Richard Wormser inquires, "After Professor Kinsey has followed his popular treatise with another on the opposite sex would not a few new juveniles be in order?" And Alan Green has the title (but no plot yet) for a sure-fire novel for the fall: "The Man Who Startled Kinsey." . . . An author explained, "There is a great moral value in being represented by the most important literary agency in the world. Now my novels are rejected simultaneously in New York, London, Chicago, and Hollywood." . . . *Punch* reports the mysterious disappearance of a lion-tamer from a circus troupe, and adds, "Perhaps something he disagreed with ate him." . . .

PAULA STONE and Michael Sloane will produce H. S. Kraft's dramatization of Sinclair Lewis's "Kingsblood Royal." Van Heflin and Marsha Hunt are the leading candidates for the principal roles. The play will open in San Francisco, and is scheduled to reach Broadway next fall. . . . Adria Locke Langley, author of "A Lion Is in the Streets," has dramatized Robert Fontaine's novel "The Happy Time." It will be staged under the banner of Leo Lieberman. . . . Those two famous collaborators, Edna Ferber and George Kaufman, are working together again on a new play. S. N. Behrman, Sidney Kingsley, and Moss Hart also are immersed in new scripts. None of them will be ready until next season. . . . Meanwhile, Tennessee Williams's smash hit, "A Streetcar Named Desire," provides as exciting and soul-satisfying an evening in the theatre as possibly can be imagined, with direction and acting that are simply superb. . . . Williams has dug up the hundred-year-old joke about the colored gentleman who sat in his favorite rocker on the porch and watched a rooster pursue a hen round and round the house. A girl came out of the house and sprinkled corn on the ground in the middle of the race. The hen ignored it, and continued its flight. The rooster, however, gave up the chase instantly and started to peck at the corn. The old gentleman murmured softly, "Lord, oh Lord, I hopes I never gits as hungry as that!"

BENNETT CERF.

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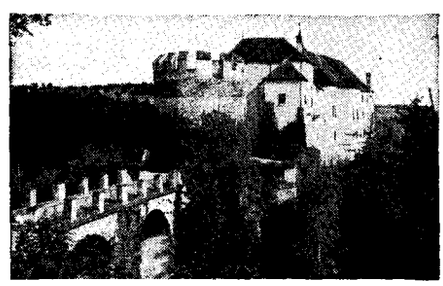

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Thirteen Adventurers

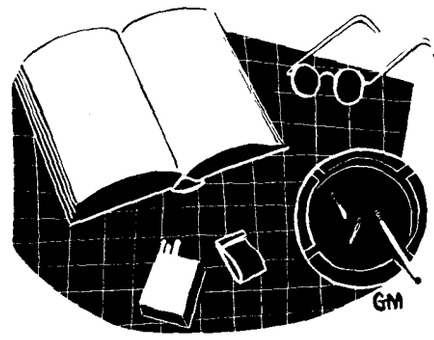
A Study of a Year of First Novelists, 1947

HARRISON SMITH

THE PUBLISHING season and the writers and reviewers who minister to it have a fortnight or so between late December and early January to catch their breath. It is customary at that time to take the measure of the past year, to discover or invent the directions in which writers have been heading, and sometimes to attempt to catalogue them and file them neatly away in graded and labeled little boxes, where they will live safely with their ordained companions. It is simple enough to invent "trends" for new writers and extraordinarily difficult to keep them headed in the right direction. Steinbeck was once enclosed with an agreeable group that specialized in the primitive charm of Mexicans and Indians in the Southwest, but was found later raising a great deal of dust among the writers of social protest in the Thirties. He now has a box of his own labeled, simply, Steinbeck, with these subheadings! Mexicans, California, Natural Man, Monterey. The attempt to closet Hemingway with anyone else proved to be beyond the wits of the cataloguers, for he proceeded from irony at the expense of American escapists, to bullfighting in Spain, and then to the Spanish Revolution.

This preface illustrates the difficulties faced by anyone who attempts to list the new writers of 1947 and to ask himself, "What men or gods are these?," on what manna have they fed that they may then be expected to enlighten us in our days of bewilderment? You discover that many of them have fed at the mess tables of the war in several lands, that others have browsed on Kierkegaard and Kafka, and from thence on existentialism, or have drunk the heady wine of social discontent, poverty, and class prejudice, or have learned the secrets of the psychoanalyst's couch, or have turned from reality to symbolism or fantasy. One or two have found that there is something to laugh about in today's dilemmas. A few have learned how to divert their readers with a plain tale that has no more undertones than a side of roast beef, and is as satisfying.

Professor Burgum, in his book "The Novel and the World's Dilemma," writes, "Modern fiction reflects both constructive and disintegrating phases of contemporary society. . . . That disintegration of personality which always accompanies social disintegration will not only be registered in the content of novels, but as frankly exposed in their form."



It can be noted that the novels and their authors that follow, like the ships named by Homer, are mostly sturdily built, for battle, and that their captains have no other compasses than their own wits provide. They are blown upon and driven by controversy and human passions. But there is less of the social and personal disintegration of which Professor Burgum writes than was evidenced two years ago, or certainly ten years ago. Whatever these writers have shown of bitterness in writing of Americans in Germany or Italy or at home, it is not based on utter cynicism or hopelessness. There is a sense that if they are evils they may be ameliorated in time; that if the world is half jungle and half desert, man can tame the first and bring water to the second. The writers of the Twenties and early Thirties who led our literary renaissance, and who are now regarded with the reverence given to our patriots of the Revolution, seemed to believe that an American small town would always remain a cultural desert, the business man a pathetic fool, the South a land of degenerate and shoeless sharecroppers and tortured Negroes. They implied that the morons and the Ku Kluxers, North and South, would in the end take us over.

The predominant theme in the discordant symphony of 1947 is not society at large, but man himself in such forms of society as remain to us after a second world war. Perhaps the spectacle of America, the victor in a gigantic conflict, and now throbbing with power and energy that is directed across the world, has had something to do with this strong and new motive; perhaps these writers have foreseen that in a time of ideological argument, the readers of novels may want some other fare than economic and political controversy. At any rate, these new novelists have turned to the only lasting subject for fiction, humanity itself.

The scenes and action of five of the thirteen novels under review occur abroad. Only one of them is strictly a war novel—"The Gallery," by John Horne Burns—certainly one of the most noteworthy to be published since the end of the war. The author of "The Gallery" was a GI who served in the African and Italian campaigns and who existed for a long time in the heat, eroticism, and smells of Naples, a city swarming with American troops. They seemed to have in their heads only two major ideas—common to most soldiers who had not been taught that they were supermen of a master race—women and alcohol.

BEFORE the war, Mr. Burns was a teacher of English in a boys' school in New England. His book took the form of sharp character sketches of the Italian and American men and women who drifted under the arches of Naples' famous Galleria Umberto.

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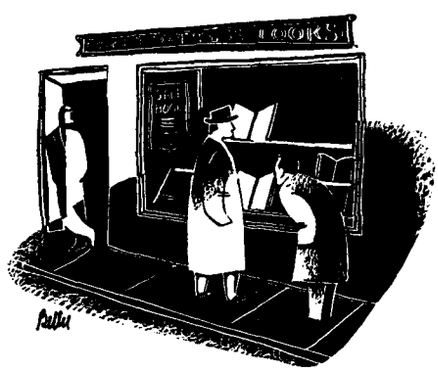
Among his "Portraits" the reader will find the *patrona* of a bar where the American and British officers and men could work off their twin obsessions. He uses the pathetic love story of an Italian girl and an American soldier, the witty dialogue between two Army chaplains, the stupidities of a pompous censor. There is a nauseating section called "Queen Penicillin," which reveals the crowded syphilis ward of a military hospital. Intertwined with these essays into pathos, sentiment, vice, and all the forms of what is lightly known as love, are scenes in North Africa, Algiers, and Italy, compounded of moments of beauty, nostalgia, and odors of such rich variety and pervasive stench that Mr. Burns may be said to have written part of his book with his nose. It is not a book for little boys in any school, but for adults who recognize the truth and know good writing when they see it, and who do not object to blatant four-letter words. The author's place in American war fiction seems certain. Compared with "The Gallery," with its sections labeled "Promenades" and "Portraits," as if this was a volume of literary vignettes, "Three Soldiers," the novel that started off the realistic fiction of the First World War, was a fragrant and tender lily.

David Davidson's "The Steeper Cliff" was the first of a new sort of post-war novel. This investigation into the mind of an American officer in defeated Germany is a sharp and almost destructive criticism of our tactics abroad. It deals with two other vital subjects, courage and treason, and it implies that there is a special quality in Americans, a sense of conscience, that the spectacle of the ruin and degradation of a beaten people can evoke, a quality that the vanquished and starving Germans found incomprehensible and even laughable. The Public Relations Officer of the novel, obsessed by the fear of being afraid, a man of generous and liberal mind, tries to find a German writer who had attacked Hitler and the Nazis brilliantly and then had disappeared. This man had courage the American knew that he lacked. In his search for what had become his other self he lost a woman he had grown to love. In finding him he established his courage and his integrity.

"The Steeper Cliff" is an inspiring and courageous novel. It blows apart the puerile conception of teaching Germans "democracy in ten easy lessons." Like a novel that was to follow it, it shows that it may be possible to dominate other nations without necessarily stultifying the mind and conscience of the individual.

JOHN HORNE BURNS at thirty-one sounds like a man who has drunk a heady draught—not really intoxicated, but engagingly exhilarated. The bounciness may have antedated the success of his novel, "The Gallery," for he grew up with six brothers and sisters who were encouraged to develop "along our own lines of genius or mania." That was his mother's idea. His father, a Boston lawyer, posed no objections. John Burns's development first veered toward a career as concert pianist—"I play all the time, strictly long hair, the longer hair the better"—until writing got the upper hand. He writes on schedule, 3,000 words in three hours daily, seven days a week. "I put myself in a chair and write. I don't wait for inspiration, or I might never get started." He is now nearing the end of his second novel, "Lucifer with a Book," planned for fall publication. It's about education in America, and he anticipates much fur will fly. He's had ample experience on both the giving and receiving ends of education: his early parochial school years in Andover, Mass. (his native town); four years at Phillips Andover Academy; Harvard from 1933-37; teaching in boys' private schools—four years before the war, two since. In the time left over from writing and music, he walks, skis, skates, and thinks about Italy. There is a girl there, daughter of a banker in Milan—"I may go back and marry her yet." He thinks he'll probably go back anyway, because he's fascinated by Europe or what he saw of it during the war. He was drafted into the infantry in 1942, rose from private to first lieutenant by easy stages, and finished off his military career in Italy (1946) as a prisoner-of-war investigator. Of his war experience he says: "The African air, the Arabs, the odd behavior of Americans—all worked on me strangely overseas. My laughter shifted to the other side of my face and finally died away. . . . For the first time in my life I became touched, concerned, moved. I discovered at long last that I wasn't any different from anybody else. And when I went to Italy I experienced an annihilation of myself and a rebirth in that tragic but four-dimensional country."—E. P. H.

The subsequent novel on this theme is Lionel Shapiro's "The Sealed Verdict." Partially autobiographical, it is the story of a young American major whose duty it was to prosecute and convict six Nazi war criminals. The action takes place in the five days that follow Major Lasher's horrified discovery that the testimony that sent one of these Nazis to his death was perjured. The conflict in the novel is between the civilian and the military mind, between the passion for justice and the code that the end justifies the means. Justice must be stern, but it may not be corrupt. The Major's discovery that an American military court had unwittingly taken advantage of the same means the Nazis themselves would have used to get rid of an enemy brings about a conflict with his superiors. But the novel, though it casts a sidelight on the uneasiness and suspicion with which many in this country have come to regard even the Nuremburg trials, is a better story than this recital indicates. The Major falls in love with a Frenchwoman who has attended all the court sessions in which he conceived that he was bringing American justice to the enemy. Since she was there obviously as a friend of his German victim, her arrest is ordered. "The Sealed Verdict" is therefore an absorbing love story as well as a man's struggle with his compassion and his conscience against forces that are actually evil.



The two remaining novels with foreign settings are not directly involved in the war. Percy Winner's "Dario" is the result of a newspaper correspondent's attempt to understand and explain what fascism means. He was well equipped to do so, for after Mr. Winner's first assignments to London and Paris he spent four years in Rome and later was director of the International News Service in that capital. His novel is focused entirely on one man, a brilliant Italian Fascist who becomes his friend on strange

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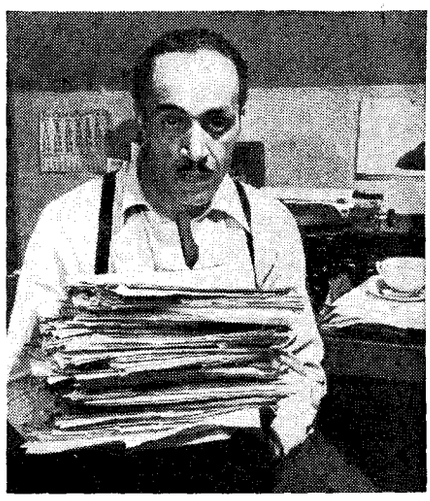
terms, for the man attracted and repelled him at the same time. Actually, "Dario" is a political profile; a fascinating analysis of European politics before and during the war. Dario had the self-discipline, the will power, that made his brutal and arrogant creed so dangerous to the world; he was also an adventurer, an orator, and a poet. The author's knowledge of psychology and his interest in fascism enables him to penetrate the shell of this formidable man. His absorption in his subject might have made his novel self-centered and oppressive if it had not been illuminated with sympathy and a wide knowledge of the European scenes in a time of chaos. It is a short book that has the ability to grasp the reader's attention, for it teaches that the Fascists might well have conquered the world if they had not, like Dario, been opportunists and traitors at heart.

"The Black Fountains" is a novel of Japan, written by a man who is part American, part Scotchman. Oswald Wynd was born in Tokyo, and lived in Japan until he was eighteen. His book is an extraordinary achievement. He had been in a Japanese war prison, and yet it expresses his love of the country and of the many Jap-

(*Continued on page* 30)



—*Ebony—Wayne F. Miller.*

Willard Motley

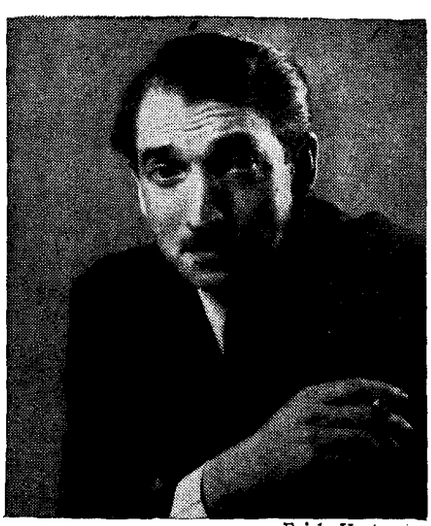
First Novelists of 1947

ELOISE PERRY HAZARD

There is no slide rule by which to write a first novel that will attract critical kudos. That is the conclusion one must reach after pondering the careers of the thirteen new novelists *SRL* is evaluating this week. But the majority—ten—have approached success via newspaper and/or magazine and radio jobs. Two have been teachers. One only—whose life was more than ordinarily disrupted by the war—falls into no set classification.

Although **Lionel Shapiro** is more blond and less sardonic than the picture below indicates, it was a perspicacious camera that transfixed his quizzical expression. He has been asking questions most of his forty years. He doesn't know all the answers, but —a roving correspondent since 1939— he is very sure "it would be impossible to whip any European peoples into a warlike spirit now." Left-of-center but no Communist, he is no longer persona grata in the Balkans after one (only one is necessary) unfavorable criticism about USSR—but "I call the shots as I see them."

Because he feels strongly about things that are happening across the Atlantic and wants to make America (this, to him, includes Canada) aware of them, he turned to fiction as a more compelling conveyor belt. One of his chief ideas he put in the mouth of his novel's hero: "The dark tragedy of patriotism is that men will fight for their country rather than for the principles that made their country beloved to them." Another, Struthers Burt brought out in his *SRL* review: "Actually, the protagonist [of the book] is compassion; the antagonist, the stupidity, the folly, and the childish cruelty of war." When that critique reached him in Rome he was so elated he "stepped down manholes and walked into streetcars all day."



—*Erich Hartmann.*

Lionel Shapiro

Back in New York after eight months in Italy projecting interpretative broadcasts (CBS) and newspaper articles (NANA), he is holed up in a hotel writing his second novel. So far as writing is concerned, he confesses to agoraphobia, and finds New York and London the perfect incubators. He hopes to write a play —"the theatre is my first love"—after he gets enough books off his chest.

He was born at Montreal of Russian-Polish parents, grew up there, graduated from McGill, became a sportswriter, turned up as a White House correspondent at war's beginning, and got across for "all the D days." Although New York is his home base, he retains Canadian citizenship—"I'm an internationalist, but a man must have roots somewhere." He's a bachelor. He says it's easier to carry a typewriter than a wife through Europe's trouble spots.

Willard Motley has been among other things student, football player, coach, migratory laborer, ranch hand, short-order cook, dishwasher, Christmas card salesman, coal hiker, baker's helper, waiter, janitor, chauffeur, handy man, window washer, plasterer's helper, stock clerk, order clerk, shipping clerk, animal caretaker, laboratory technician, "artist" (painting decorative brandy bottles), photographer, radio script writer, Housing Authority interviewer, Office of Civilian Defense writer, contributor to magazines, and recipient of a Book of-the-Month Club accolade.

This is not a complete list of the protean Mr. Motley's pursuits in the thirty-five years since he was born in one of Chicago's more noisome sections. But it is sufficiently complete to have made necessary three transcontinental trips—by bicycle, by jalopy, by thumb, and by brake-rods. It also explains his intimate knowledge of juke joints, Negro sections, hobo camps, and flophouses of several dozen states, as well as the inside of a jail (he once served thirty days— for vagrancy). "Jack of all trades, master of none" he turned into an untrue truism. All the experiences of menial jobs and menial people—the wanderers and the workers, the poor and the desperate—he poured into a giant hopper from which he drained off the tale of brutal honesty and profound compassion told in his successful first novel.

Willard Motley's second novel, about soldiers home from the wars and tentatively titled "They Fished All Night," is being gestated on an Oregon ranch. He did not corner all the artistic talent in the family. An older brother, Archibald John Motley, Jr., studied painting in Paris on a 1929 Guggenheim fellowship, returned to have a one-man show in New York, and has attained stature in the art world.

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—*Arni.*

Percy Winner

Percy Winner must operate on a dynamo. With just a normal heart it isn't likely his system could survive his pyrotechnics for long. Not tall, not fat, a little sinister at first sight —actually it's the mustache—brilliant, erudite, witty, urbane, loquacious, he seems a veritable Nostradamus. The stage was deprived of a convincing actor when he took up journalism and journalism relinquished a distinguished political commentator when he turned to novel-writing. That was two years back, when he found himself at loose ends, during the post-war confusion, and faced with the decision as to what *one* person could do to make the issues clear.

Already he's named his fourth novel "The Rod and the Serpent" and settled down to work on it. The third —"The Mote and the Beam"—will be out next month. The second had the baffling title "Scene in the Ice-Blue Eyes" and was mistakenly reviewed as a "mystery." He uses his prolonged political - journalistic experience as background for his books, but always subordinated to his theme. That remains a constant: the struggle between good and evil. He's not interested in writing about "political man," but "moral man."—"I am a very moral man, a religious man."

He was born in New York of third-generation American parents with strong links to Western European things. He attended Columbia College and studied at the Sorbonne, earning his way by working nights for the Paris editions of the *New York Herald* and *Chicago Tribune*. That was the beginning of an impressive career which eventually prompted Lincoln Steffens to remark that Winner was "coming to understand this new thing called Fascism better than anyone I know."

Once a Jap subject—"I gave that up in good time—" but more recently a Jap war prisoner, **Oswald Wynd** emerged from his three-year incarceration completely confused as to his nationality. He was born in Tokyo on the Fourth of July, 1913, of Scottish parents with American connections and leanings. His two sisters were United States citizens, and his brother a Canadian. He himself had been a British subject at one period. His education has also had an interwoven texture: a dozen years at the American School in Japan; 1932-33 at the Atlantic City (N. J.) High School; "a prolonged connection with Edinburgh University." In Scotland for a three-month visit from America with the intention of returning here to Haverford College, he settled instead in Britain and "sent in a steady stream of Mss. to my unhappy agents." Then, in 1942, because of his

Oswald Wynd

excessive height he found himself in the Scot's guards. After eleven months he wangled a commission and was off to Malaya with British Intelligence attached to the Indian Army. He "went into the bag with the rest in 1940" and was held prisoner, eighteen months in Malaya, another eighteen in Japan, until V-J Day. In the prison camps he managed to preserve his Mss. by keeping diaries for confiscation which the Japs carried off in great triumph. He began his first novel in the summer of 1945 as a result of a surprise communication from a former Japanese friend tipping him off to the reactionary movement developing sub rosa in Japan. From Scotland, he has just sent word that his second novel, "Red Run South"—about the Japanese occupation of Malaya—will be ready for July publication.

On the assumption that two heads are better than one, **Robert McLaughlin** formed a writing team with his wife, Mignon (Mike) Bushell, who had been selling slick magazine fiction for some time, after he had begun to receive considerable acclaim for his own writing solo. To date the collaboration has been productive and profitable: some of the women's magazines bought their fiction: *Vogue* ran a picture story they did about Newburyport, Mass.; and the astute Herman Shumlin took an option on a play, "The Scenic Route," reported notable for brilliant dialogue. They are tinkerning with another drama based on Chekov's "The Darling." "I suspect it is very slight," deprecates Mr. McLaughlin.

The "Mc" denotes Irish, not Scottish, forebears. After a Chicago childhood, he weathered a year at U. of Illinois, "busted out" after two at U. of Colorado. He sold his first story to *Esquire* in 1930 and "decided to be a writer." Of course, he headed for New York, and after some fits and starts climbed aboard the star wagon when an advertising agency snapped him up on the basis of a *New Yorker* piece. He worked briefly for *Time*, and was occupying the managing editor's chair at *McCall's* when the Army tapped him in 1943. Now, at forty, after two years' free lancing, he is back on *Time* and commutes daily from Long Beach, L.I.

There are two small McLaughlins, one four, the other three, both adopted: "We named one Thomas Paine because he seemed to represent a political ambivalence we shared; the other James Joyce, just because Joyce was such a remarkable writer. Looks like Tom Paine will be the writer, though; he's already making up portmanteau words."

Robert McLaughlin

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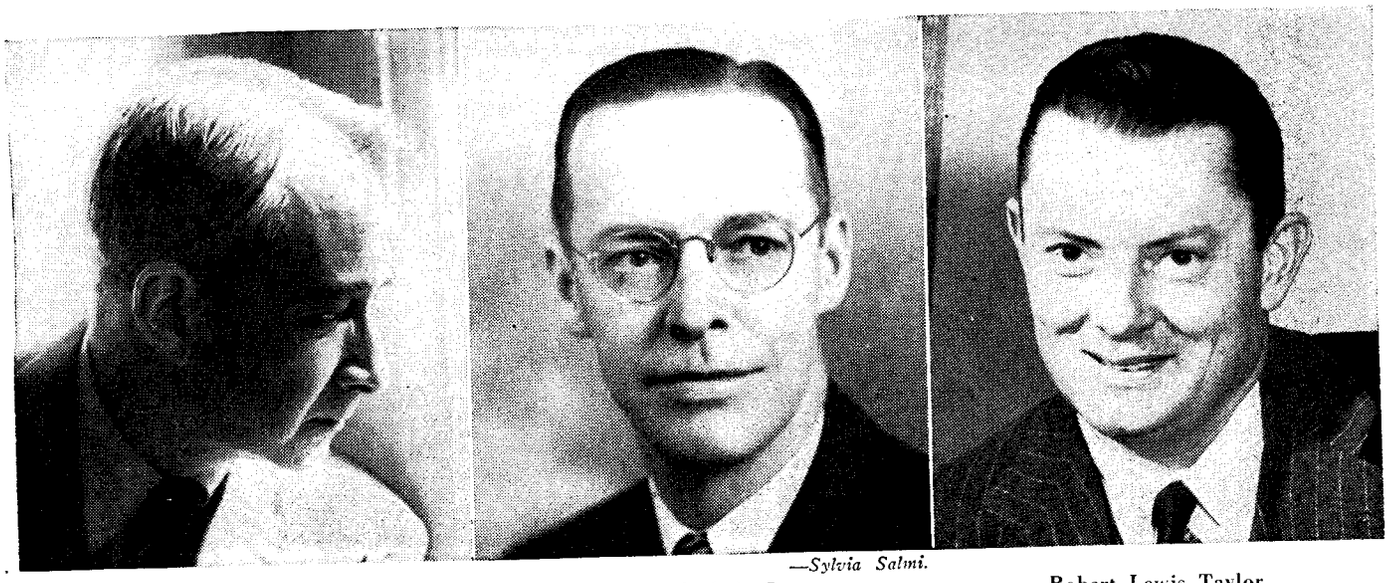

—*Sylvia Salmi.*

Lionel Trilling

A. B. Guthrie, Jr.

Robert Lewis Taylor

Those who have read **Lionel Trilling's** prose expect him to look like a poet. But he looks, and dresses, like almost any conservative, middle-aged American businessman, and he teaches English with the utmost respectability at Columbia University (he's an associate professor). Yet he stands as one of the most important literary figures among America's left-of-center intellectuals.

While he has not appeared on Information, Please—although he and Clifton Fadiman were fellow-students at Columbia—the range of his activities and his knowledge have, nevertheless, been somewhat disconcerting to the orthodox. No dogmatist in either literature or politics, he responds with equal enthusiasm to Henry James or Baudelaire, and he sees nothing strange in his being an advisory editor for both the explosively political, avantgardiste, Marxist, anti-Soviet *Partisan Review* and the more restrained, non-political, gracefully academic, and mildly experimental *Kenyon Review*. To his own obvious enjoyment, his work has found its way even into the perfumed boudoir twilight of *Harper's Bazaar*. His short stories have been included in "The Best American Short Stories of 1944" and "1946." *SRL* readers will of course remember his two books of criticism —"Matthew Arnold" and "E. M. Forster."

He is married to Diana Trilling, literary critic of *The Nation*. They live just off the Columbia campus in an apartment where the total work-output—his and hers—must be prodigious. Dissatisfied with his limited life as a critic, editor, educator, writer of short stories, political thinker, and student of Freud, Mr. Trilling finished his first novel, calmly waited for the exciting applause to subside, and went to work on another.

An interest in Indians and the Far West came naturally to **A. B. Guthrie, Jr.**, because he was born in Indiana and was raised in Montana, where he grew to know and like a great many redskins, of assorted tribes. He now lives in Kentucky. In his first novel, therefore, he was writing about the people and places he knew and loved.

Struggling to bring forth "The Big Sky" he found so enervating he hadn't the courage left for anything but shorts. He concluded that "writing differs from most occupations in that the reward lies, not in doing, but in having done." But now, his labor pains grown dim, he admits that "Sky" was merely the first of a four-novel series, and is again in the throes of the creative process. Part II tells the story of the Oregon Trail.

He's an enthusiastic outdoorsman; he enjoys fishing, camping, riding. Once he liked to hunt. Now he'd rather "just look." He has collected Western Americana for twenty years, offshoots of this hobby being an interest in old furniture, especially the "old cherry and walnut pieces sometimes still to be found hereabouts," and old firearms.

Born in 1901—"too young for one war, too old for the next"—he grew up in Choteau, Mont., where his father was high-school principal, took a B.A. in journalism at the University of Montana, worked for a year on the Choteau newspaper his father owned and edited, and moved on to Kentucky to spend twenty years on the *Lexington Leader*. He resigned as executive editor two years ago to write.

He is married to the former Harriet Larson of Choteau, daughter of some Montana old-timers. Their two children are such ardent lovers of the West they insist on starting for Montana each year the day school lets out.

When he joined *The New Yorker* staff in 1940 Robert Taylor became **Robert Lewis Taylor** for professional purposes. *The New Yorker* already had the well-known R. Taylor in its stable of cartoonists. Then, there was the even more widely-known Robert Taylor of the cinema to confuse identities. Adding his middle name was agreeable to him, except that it seemed a little presumptuous to use the given names of Robert Louis Stevenson, "a real writer," which he makes no claim to being. That's why he was flabbergasted, albeit flattered, when Charles Poore of *The New York Times* put his book on the 1947 ten-best fiction list.

Mr. Taylor is at a loss to explain the blurb on the jacket of his book just published, "Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant, Chief"—a collection of his profiles and reminiscences culled from *The New Yorker* and other magazines—to the effect that "Mr. Taylor is something new in American humor." He looks at the world literally with amused eyes and talks in an understated voice, not taking himself or anything else—but the art of being funny—seriously. His attachment to *The New Yorker* endured even through three and a half years' Naval service: "It was a nifty arrangement. They did the leg work and I did the writing."

Previously, he had tried unsuccessfully to land a New York job during the Thirties, then had tied up with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for a short time. This wasn't his first taste of journalism, however. He had edited a small-town newspaper at Carbondale, Ill., his home state, for a year, sandwiched between a European cycling trip in 1933, following graduation from the U. of Illinois, and a jaunt to Tahiti—lingering in that lotus land a spell—New Zealand, Fiji, Honolulu.

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Gabrielle Roy was bitten by the writing bug when a small girl and has never recovered from the resultant infection. She was the youngest of eight children and, after finishing convent and normal school, found it necessary to teach for a while. Then she deviated briefly from her early goal, and used her savings to go to London to study for the stage. But publication of some of her short stories refired her original ambition. Back in Canada in 1939 with her one tangible asset, a typewriter, she managed to make a living writing stories and feature articles for the Canadian papers and magazines, and a series of studies of Canadian life for *Le Bulletin des Agriculteurs*. Out of each year she contrived to salvage several months to devote to her first novel, "The Tin Flute"—which turned out to be a Literary Guild selection in the States.

Although she was born of French-Canadian pioneer stock, in the wide open spaces of Manitoba, she set the stage of her novel in Montreal's slum section of St. Henri, choked between the base of a mountain and the Lachine canal and huddled below the affluent Westmount with its rigidly English standards of comfort. Lonely and at large, she began to wander daily through this French industrial district and became intrigued with its character and inhabitants. Her book about them has been called "probably the most authentic picture of the working class to come out of Canada." It was published in Canada in a French edition under the title "Bonheur d'Occasion," and earned awards from L'Academie Francaise and L'Academie Canadienne Francaise.

After her marriage last summer to Dr. Marcel Carbotte, she set sail with him for Paris, where she is writing and he is studying.

Tall, dark, and voluble **David Davidson** has just finished the first draft of his second novel—"The Runaways"—and is off skiing before putting the high polish on this new work. The acclaim his first novel received—Lewis Gannett calls it by all odds the best book by a new novelist last year—can scarcely have come as a surprise to him, for he had chalked up a list of successes all along the line: an A.B. from the College of the City of New York in 1928, at the age of twenty; a B. Lit. from Columbia the next year; a 1929-30 Pulitzer traveling scholarship that took him to France and Germany for languages and England for economics; a succession of newspaper posts specializing in trial and foreign affairs for the *New York World* and *New York Post* among others, 1928-39; the beginning of a radio career, during the early war years, that comprised authorship of more than 700 soap-opera scripts; production of wartime Government programs in Spanish for Latin America.

David Davidson used to be "feverishly" addicted to traveling and managed two more European trips and one to S. America before Mars put a stop to gadding. The experience of being trapped in Granada for six weeks at the outset of the Spanish War and service as a civilian specialist in Germany with SHAEF, Third Army, and Military Government of Bavaria, have wiped the hectic flush from his enthusiasm for travel. He will settle now for tennis, ice-skating, or an evening of bridge. Mrs. Davidson (Hilda Abel) brought out a 1947 novel, "The Lake." Their daughter, seven-year-old Carla, has caught the family infection, and is in the throes of composing a novel—it's about two children and their mother—, "treated realistically," and has asked her parents for a $2 advance.

The girl who was elected the wittiest in the Marshalltown High School (Iowa) class of '38—**Esther Carlson**—had already channeled her humor into the "Uncle George" stories that eventually turned into the fantasy "Moon Over the Back Fence." But she got little encouragement for her writing. Her high-school journalism teacher said she was no good. She received poor grades in English. Her Grinnell College marks substantiated these estimates. Then she became engaged to the editor of the campus paper and realized her ambitions—he made her assistant editor. She at length snared top post on the college humor magazine and wrote almost all the copy with the exception of what she "lifted from *The Yale Record*." One of her short stories an English professor called "too Russian."

Confident that she would find somebody who would like to read what she liked to write, fantasy, she headed for New York in 1943. And there, at last, during and between an assortment of writing jobs for *Time*, NBC, Gimbel's, and UP, endorsement of her literary wares was forthcoming. She showed Jacques Duval, French playwright, two "Uncle George" stories. "He grabbed my hands and shrieked that I was a genius. I was happy to hear it." She got a Breadloaf scholarship on Richard Wright's recommendation. Fletcher Pratt encouraged her output of fantasy when everyone else was telling her she *could* write, but for heaven's sake why didn't she write *realistically*. Then she sold "The Radiant Wood," which was published as an *Atlantic* "first" September 1946. Not long after she married Robert Allen Bolster, a New Yorker, and went off to Rochester to live. He attends the Rochester Institute of Technology. She keeps house and writes when the spirit moves.

Gabrielle Roy

—*Vandamm.*

David Davidson

Esther Carlson

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—*Halsman.*

Herman Wouk

Herman Wouk is one of those gifted young men who seem to have everything. He is tall, handsome, a good speaker, a deft writer, and has known from the first where he was going. He attracted the attention of Irwin Edman at the start of his Columbia College career because he was not only unusually young — having raced through high school in three years— but a brilliant student as well, especially in philosophy. But that didn't affect Wouk's sense of humor. He became editor of the Columbia *Jester* and wrote the varsity show for two years. What he learned there he later put to lucrative use as gag writer for Fred Allen, Henry Morgan, and other radio comedians. Thus he acquired the kind of tidy fortune that affords independence and the leisure to write books.

When the war came he wrote the radio shows that sold U. S. war bonds —as a dollar-a-year-man in Washington. Subsequently, he joined the Navy, sailed six of the seven seas, and saw action on all of them. When the destroyer *Southard* went down in a typhoon, he lost everything except the manuscript of an amusing book about soap. Last year, after this book became a Book-of-the-Month Club choice and a best seller to boot, he stuck his tongue out at radio in an article for '47 called "Goodbye to Jokes."

His next book has been described as a Jewish Penrod. It's the story of a boy from the Bronx, and rumor says it's his own childhood "recollected in love and tranquility."

At the moment, he's cruising the Pacific again with the Navy. His wife — who worked during the war in Los Angeles for the Navy — and son have left their Northport (L.I.) home to watch for him on the West Coast.

New Fiction.

Of the six first novels reviewed this week three have Africa as the scene; their themes range from the evils of industrialization, to a houseparty besieged by wild natives, and to the old story of miscegenation. Among the American novels are young Truman Capote's haunting story of Southern decadence, Ralph Ingersoll's first attempt at fiction, for which he will inevitably be accused of using his background on Time, *and Marya Mannes's haunting tale of a woman who came back after death. This is a decidedly notable crop to harvest at the beginning of the new year.*

A Dixieland Stew

OTHER VOICES, OTHER ROOMS. By Truman Capote. New York: Random House. 1948. 231 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by RICHARD MCLAUGHLIN

FOR YEARS now we have had it drummed into us that the South is decaying. With the exception of the novels of Ellen Glasgow, Caroline Gordon, Stark Young, and Margaret Mitchell, we have a difficult time trying to visualize crinolines, magnolia blossoms, and barbecues ever having existed below the Mason and Dixon line. And certainly Truman Capote's novel does not suggest that young Southern novelists are inclined to look any more cheerfully on their sunny land this year than last.

Against the somewhat creaking, musty backdrop of the Louisiana swamplands, replete with rotting Spanish moss, toadstools, spider webs, crumbling, dilapidated old Southern mansions, and the pitter-patter of ghostly feet dancing on the dusty ballroom floor, Truman Capote unfolds his incredible little tale of Southern decay. Perhaps if we had not seen how skilfully and successfully Mr. Capote handled his frightening nightmare world of devil-children and escaped lunatics in his short stories, we would not be half so disappointed in the way he has put together various macabre elements for a full-length novel. Where the highly effective and carefully credited mood of terror and awful sense of evil in his short stories could hold a reader for a half hour's sitting, these same character creations in a novel appear more often like caricatures of nasty people whose actions and mannerisms fail to intrigue or terrify us.

It would appear that instead of writing a cohesive narrative of people who move in a region where the dream world exists side by side with the familiar and commonplace, Mr. Capote, for all his deftness in creating an image, has concocted a witch's brew which boils and boils to no avail. In fact, readers weary of reading about the South's decline are apt to accuse Mr. Capote of dishing up a Dixieland stew in which Faulkner, Caldwell, Welty, shades of the defunct *View* magazine, Charles Addams's weirdies, Proust's most celebrated passages, all seem to have gone. This is regrettable since Mr. Capote *does* have a remarkable facility with words; he can make perfectly normal horrors and shocks appear like enormities upon the senses. At times we can even hear a haunting, funereal music behind Mr. Capote's wayward language. If he had selected his material more carefully, shown more restraint, and had been less concerned with terrifying us out of our wits, he might have easily made a real and tenderly appealing story out of the experiences of thirteen-year-old Joel Knox and the people he meets during that long and lonely summer of his approaching maturity.

It is inevitable that comparisons will be made between Capote's book and Carson McCullers's "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter." Unfortunately, though Capote's novel is also about the experiences and observations of an adolescent, he does not have the maturity or the all-pervading sense of humanity that Mrs. McCullers had when she was twenty-two. Besides, those other voices whispering in other rooms chill us without arousing our emotions.

Ordinarily we should be moved very deeply by a little boy thrown into the company of such queerly behaved folk as Mr. Capote writes about. But somehow—and it is one of the major flaws of Mr. Capote's book—we never feel sorry for little Joel Knox long enough to see him as a live, healthy, normal child. There are always too many disagreeable people crowding the scene. Or when that is not happening Mr. Capote's adolescent lets his morbid imagination lead him down those dark, unfathomable corridors of his nightmare world.

Capote might have stopped collect-

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ing his grotesques with Joel's father, who is paralyzed and is only a pair of eyes. But no—he creates a whole menagerie to terrify us. There is Miss Amy, Joel's stepmother, who traps bluejays in the house and breaks their backs with a poker; Randolph, who loves dressing up in ladies' clothes, and whose womanly fingers are extremely deft with fine handicraft work; Missouri, the Negro servant girl, whose frenzied incantations ask for nothing but revenge against the husband who once tried to slit her throat with a razor; little Sunshine, the Negro hermit, who brews witch's potions for her; Idabel and Florabel, the twelve-year-old twins, one of whom talks right out of the ante-bellum South, the other an unnatural child whose tomboyish nature drives her to commit mayhem on her snaggletoothed twin; Miss Wisteria, the carnival midget with whom Idabel falls in love, but whose lecherous hands seek to hold our little hero, Joel—who, incidentally, has a rendezvous awaiting him with the strange lady smiling at him from Randolph's window.

A Publishing Czar and His Mrs.

THE GREAT ONES. By Ralph Ingersoll. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1948. 308 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by MERLE MILLER

SOMEDAY somebody is going to write a sensational novel about Henry Luce and the former Congresswoman and playwright who is Mrs. Luce. There is a lot of material available, most of which has appeared either on the front pages or scattered through Mr. Luce's own fantastically successful *Time, Life,* and *Fortune.* Some of it has been passed along in the anecdotage that is an inevitable part of the better cocktail parties, though, naturally, this will have to be checked for accuracy. But this book, despite the grapevine, doesn't do that particular job.

Ralph Ingersoll, in addition to half a dozen other jobs in the Luce empire, was once publisher of *Time* magazine. He was at one time certainly in a position to know all the facts about the boss and the boss's wife, and several weeks before "The Great Ones" was published word got around that the two very important people whose love story this is were really the Luces. Unfortunately, the rumor appears to have been wrong. Mr. Ingersoll is careful to point out that his Sturges Strong is younger and, indeed, more successful than Publisher Luce; Letia Long, his feminine protagonist, is a minor actress, the successful owner of a dress shop and wholesale firm, a painter of striking if not overwhelming talent, a minor though best-selling novelist, and, briefly, a scenario writer in Hollywood; but she did *not* write "The Women."

No, "The Great Ones" is supposed to be a creation of the imagination, and I'm afraid it must be judged as such. It is also one of the few novels of all time in which the novelist himself appears as a character under his own name. Happily, in his book, Ralph Ingersoll turns out to be quite a nice fellow—genial, understanding, sympathetic.

Actually, of course, there are some uncomfortable parallels in Mr. Ingersoll's book. Sturges Strong—although he was born in New York and not in China—does attend Yale, and while there he and another bright undergraduate, Allen Bishop, do get the idea for a weekly news magazine which they call *Facts, The Knowing Weekly.* "Only a few years before," Mr. Ingersoll hurriedly explains, "Time, Inc., had begun in a not dissimilar combination, when Henry Luce and Briton Hadden had been undergraduates. . . ."

Facts, the first editors of which are all Yale men (with the exception of a rather crude interloper who attended Dartmouth) becomes an immediate and highly profitable success, and a few years later Sturges launches *Fantasy,* a semi-weekly which competed with *Life.* "*Life* was too serious-minded. . . . It tried to educate. . . . They [*Fantasy's* editors] would cover crime and sex in photographs." I'm not certain which *Life* Mr. Ingersoll means. *Fantasy* even has comics.

In his off-duty hours, Sturges has also met several willingly attractive young ladies, most of whom seem to be models for the Powers Agency, and has married his partner's girl friend. Letia manages to keep pretty busy, but she does find time to marry a horsey young man who, when she divorces him, works out a two-million-dollar settlement.

And then, halfway through the book, Sturges and Letia meet at the admittedly unromantic airport in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They fall in love: ". . . neither of them had really known what it was like to love before they loved each other. They were, in fact, extraordinarily virginal personalities."

After Sturges gets rid of his first wife, he marries Letia. It would be pleasant to report that they lived happily ever after, but they didn't. In a moment of financial crisis, Sturges appeals to Letia for a loan, but she shakes her pretty ash-blonde head, and that's that. Then the war comes along, and she, naturally, has to take a trip to Africa; it's not clear how many artillery pieces she fires. By V-J Day, Sturges has decided that the only way "to recapture love" (Mr. Ingersoll's

"Comes the evolution. . . ."

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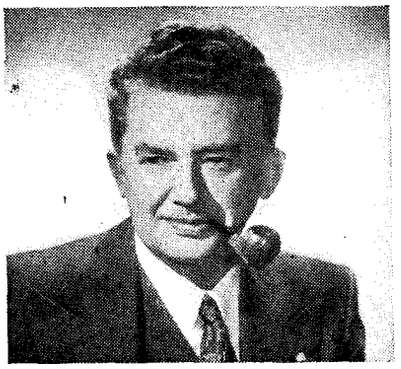

My Current Reading

Jean Hersholt, film actor, who is president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Motion Picture Relief Fund, and for ten years the "Dr. Christian" of radio fame, sends us his list of current reading. A distinguished book collector, Mr. Hersholt specializes in Hans Christian Andersen, whose works he has translated into English.

PANORAMA OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, *by W. Tasker Witham (Stephen Daye Press)*
CHARLES DICKENS, *by Una Pope-Hennessy (Howell Soskin)*
KNUDSEN, *by Norman Beasley (Whittlesey House)*
MY DANISH FATHER, *by Karl Eskelund (Doubleday)*
PILGRIMS THROUGH SPACE AND TIME, *by J. O. Bailey (Bea Abramson)*
THE TIMES OF MELVILLE AND WHITMAN, *by Van Wyck Brooks (Dutton)*
SPEAKING FRANKLY, *by James F. Byrnes (Harper)*
HOUSE DIVIDED, *by Ben Ames Williams (Houghton Mifflin)*
INSIDE U. S. A., *by John Gunther (Harper)*
WITCHCRAFT IN ENGLAND, *by Christina Hole (Scribner)*

phrase) is to spend a year in Brazil.

When they return, it's not explained whether or not the trip was successful. Sturges seems to be doing a lot of thinking about God, and Letia is flying to California to attempt to rescue the Republican Party from another of its perennial crises.

Ralph Ingersoll is an extraordinarily able although somewhat controversial journalist; his "The Battle is the Pay-Off" was one of the first and better non-fiction war books; "Top Secret," while many readers distrusted its conclusions, was certainly lively, and Mr. Ingersoll's editorials in *PM*, of which he was the first editor, were never dull. "The Great Ones" is. Mr. Ingersoll never seems to be able to make up his mind whether he loves or loathes his principal protagonists; he is always more cautious than caustic. His people are of necessity fantastic, but they never become believable. They are just not very interesting. "The Great Ones" is the work of a reporter, not a novelist. One chapter opens with the warning, "The next few pages can, if necessary, be skipped." Unfortunately, this is true of many others.

I wish somebody *would* write a novel about Henry Luce and his Mrs.; that's a book I want to read.

Comfort in Desolation

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY. By Alan Paton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1948. 278 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ADRIENNE KOCH

ALAN PATON is a social scientist who has taken the deepest problems of South Africa so close to heart that the neutral exposition of a report could no longer satisfy him. As a social scientist, the author shows high competence and intimate knowledge of black and white peoples: as a novelist, he shows high seriousness and creates a greatly moving and beautiful story.

Rarely have professional story tellers in recent years achieved the affecting truthfulness, the shining warmth, and analytic sanity of this book. And while a writer's "sincerity" is a quagmire criterion to use in judging artistic worth, Mr. Paton's sincerity must be remarked because it is overwhelming and objectified in the utterly credible people who inhabit his story. It is also evident in the real problems that the author makes his people face—problems that are tragically present in all countries where primitive cultures clash with modern industrial development.

This is the story of Kumalo, a humble black parson who journeys from one of the fairest valleys of South Africa to Johannesburg, the city of evil. He goes in search of his only son, who has sent no word since leaving the native valley. In searching, Kumalo encounters for the first time the widespread licentiousness and crime of his uprooted people. He realizes, with suffering, that their personal immorality is only a result of the harsh industrialization in a colonial society of white leadership and black bondage. Kumalo's realization burns into his pure and confident soul when he learns that his son, in hysterical fright, has just murdered a white man who was a leading crusader for the rights of the black race in South Africa.

The few slow fruits of this shattering experience are present in Kumalo's new-found friends: the magnificently Christian native priest, Msimangu, who helps him through the difficult days in Johannesburg; his son's young wife, who despite her sinful past returns with Kumalo to live with his family as a daughter in complete good faith and affection; and, deepest satisfaction of all, the father of the murdered man, who comes to understand Kumalo's misery, develops this understanding into respect for the good parson's selfless work, and finally strips himself of his wealth in the effort to reconstruct the economic vitality of the broken Zulu tribe which constitutes Kumalo's flock. The cumulative effect of these friendships has the force of a miracle for Kumalo. Left without an "answer" to all his mixed feelings and anguished foreboding of greater racial conflicts to come, Kumalo can still preserve the undogmatic elements of his Christian and socialist faith by seeing that without love and charity nothing of value can be achieved by technical "progress."

Assuredly then, we have here a "problem" novel—but, unlike other earnest novels on racial injustice, this work involves the reader in its own compassionate quest, never making him the victim of the author's external problem-probing. For in the story of Kumalo's pilgrimage, bitter re-formed plight and re-formed faith, Mr. Paton has fashioned an objective correlative for one of the central problems of our time—how to resolve belief in the dignity and integrity of the individual with the needs of modern industrial society. It is indeed, as the subtitle states, "A Story of Comfort in Desolation."

Anniversary

By Leonora Speyer

THAT was a kindly storm, I know,
That leaned against the ship's strong side,
That held me from you while you died.
The sea is not as salt, as wide,
As is such human woe.

Shallow the ocean, tempest tame! . . .
They say you called the far ship's name.
They say that Tristram did the same.

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The Dear Departed

MESSAGE FROM A STRANGER. By Marya Mannes. New York: The Viking Press. 1948. 246 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

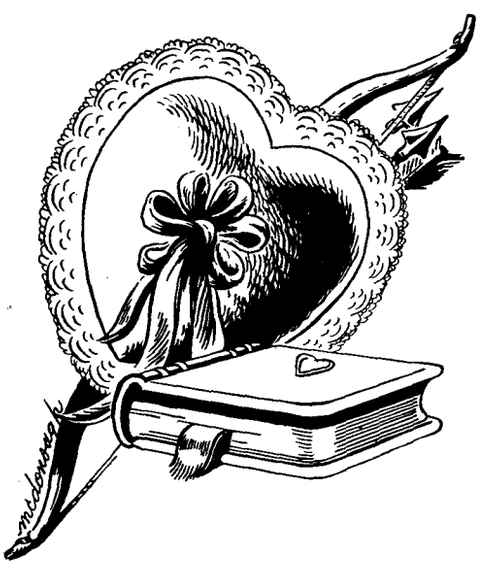
WITH the material that Marya Mannes has gathered for her first novel, "Message from a Stranger," she might have been a better-than-average reporter of the confusions and stresses of modern woman's life. The author has obviously lived in the center, or slightly to the left of center, of the intellectual, social, and cultural milieu in New York in which a talented woman, with the right education, the proper upper East-Side and Continental background of wealth, music, literature, and political dialectic, can continue to mature and find a place for herself, without paying the usual forfeits for the fact that she is a woman, a wife, and a mother. All of the elements for a penetrating and suave society novel are present in this story of Olivia Whitney, a distinguished and beautiful poetess, and her relations with the turbulent revolutionist who was her first husband, the understanding businessman who was her second, her two children, and her lover, who was at the same time her publisher. The confusion in the life of her children resulting from the dual, or even quadruple nature of their mother is an obvious and satisfactory subsidiary theme, for Olivia was at once a creative artist, a competent and satisfactory lover, a woman of the social world, and an anarchical thinker. Written in the first person, this novel might have satisfied the multitude of readers who would like to believe that such a woman can exist and who would at the same time be glad to see that the fulfillment of so many roles cannot make her happy.

But Miss Mannes in her first sentence throws the baby out of the window by killing off her heroine in short order. She writes, "I died on November 12, 1946, in New York City after a brief illness." Olivia dies with her second husband holding her hand, seems to float briefly in space, endures a moment of cosmic storm and whirlwind, and then becomes a revenant, a ghost, who for a year is present, unseen, but sometimes felt, in the lives of her children and the men she has loved. After this catastrophic change the novel proceeds to flow backward and forward through her past life and into the changes that the death of so powerful and memorable a personality must create. What might have been a conventional novel, becomes, in the manner that is familiar today, a fantasy.

Curiously enough it is a believable fantasy, for the sporadic return of her spirit is motivated by the old theory used by Maeterlinck that the dead can only be called back to earth by the summons of the living. The author adds logic to this satisfactory but somewhat horrible idea, since the times when Olivia finds herself at the side of those who have needed and loved her can be interrupted by a current of thought that drives her away. There are inconvenient moments when any well-mannered ghost should whitely blush and promptly disappear; for example, when Olivia watches one night while Brian makes love to a pretty young woman who had no proper business in his bed.

Miss Mannes is able to persuade the reader that her ghostly flitting at the beck and call of human beings who have seen her properly buried is an astonishingly satisfactory existence and that the final release, when the obsessions of earthbound creatures have lost their power, is to become cosmically everything and humanly nothing.

This is a compelling and original method of telling the life story of a woman, but it leaves a good many questions in the reader's mind. Granted that Olivia is an entrancing person, a combination of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Emily Dickinson, and that her sudden death left unfulfilled demands on her in the lives of those she left behind. But would anyone, any sane living man or woman want her back in this disembodied form, less than a wraith, for though she could be heard she could not be seen. The spectacle of Max, her first husband, alone, talking to the empty air, and of Brian conducting with her this extraordinary dialogue at the end of the book, is both somehow laughable and gruesome. "Will you do something for me that I want terribly?" he asks. "What is that?" "Will you come to our wedding? To Nora and me?" "Are you sure you want me?" "Yes!" "And Nora?" "She expects you to be there." But for the novelist as perceptive and thoughtful as is Miss Mannes this device has its advantages. It enables her to tell a story of a life that has ended by looking back into life, like those occasional and somehow awkward deathbed monologues in which authors indulge, which used to be called "stream of consciousness."



"Bulala, Bulala!"

THE FIELD OF NIGHT. By Robert W. Krepps. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1948. 328 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ETHEL CAMP HUGLI

OF THE eighty-seven books said to be issued daily by publishers, this is one which should not get lost in the shuffle, for it is a first novel of great promise.

Many stories have been written with a houseparty as a setting. Many assorted bags of guests, house-bound in odd corners of the world, have been described. But Robert Krepps has chosen a hyper-odd spot for his houseparty in inaccessible "Draakfontein," a fabulous South African estate belonging to charming, obese Allan Conrad, a place which has been developed into "the most beautiful spot in Rhodesia."

This is a hair-raising tale of a kaffir uprising and a group of stout-hearted defenders within the walls of the historic old house. It is the drums that first make your scalp begin to stir, with their repetitive and hypnotic chant, "Bulala, bulala, kill, kill!" dunning its beat into the ears of the houseparty, huddled in the fortified house, surrounded by a hundred angry, blood-lusting blacks, with thirsty spears in hand, swarming out of their beehive huts, intent on a grand purge of the whites—and Lucknow lying upstairs, the lethal assegai withdrawn from his pierced body and a sheet over his dead face.

The woman who had screamed in the woods the night of the native dance had been Chief Mpanda's favorite wife. Who could have been the libidinous ruffian who had attacked her? And who had assegaied poor Lucknow, the harmless archeologist, a murder which was the spark that exploded the uprising, as his brother Conrad's avenging bullet picked off an insolent kaffir, blood

(*Continued on page* 24)

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U.S.S.R. *Karl Marx, of course, was a German and lived half his life in London. Friedrich Engles, his collaborator on "The Communist Manifesto" of 1848, was also a German. For most of its history the Communist movement was noted for its internationalism, and until recent times diversity of opinion was as evident within it as within any other movement. The political opinions of the six early Russian radicals of David Hecht's book (reviewed below) differed in no greater degree than those of Trotsky, Lenin, and Stalin in more recent times. What, then, is a Communist today? And how did this internationalist movement become equated with Russian nationalism and a rigid party line? These are basic questions, and Mr. Ebon's able study of contemporary Communist parties will help to show what it means to be a Communist today.*

Soviet Octopus?

WORLD COMMUNISM TODAY. By Martin Ebon. New York: Whittlesey House. 1948. 482 *pp.* $4.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS FISCHER

WITH much of the world talking about and worried about Communism it was inevitable that someone would write a book about the world Communist movement. This is it.

Martin Ebon, the author of "World Communism Today," was born in Germany and came to the United States at the age of twenty-one. He got a job as a metal worker, then shipping clerk, then salesman, and finally graduated from these into journalism. He has written for *The Christian Science Monitor, Overseas News Agency,* and various magazines. He has been employed by the Office of War Information, the State Department, and the Foreign Policy Association.

Judging by this book and by his photograph, Mr. Ebon is a rather mild, gentle, soft-spoken person. He seems sweetly reasonable and factual, not very original or passionate, but solid, careful, eager to be safe. This book —his first, I assume—contains no strident tones, no denunciations.

Mr. Ebon deals with the Communist parties of the world country by country. In each case, he gives the history of the party, a thumbnail sketch of its leader or leaders, and a summary of its characteristics, problems, and achievements, as well as its numerical strength. He asserts that a good deal of this material was "obtained from government officials and from functionaries of Communist parties in all parts of the world." These accounts constitute the bulk of the book.

With Mr. Ebon's help one can follow the Communist movement from the time the Third International or Comintern was established in Moscow in 1919 down to the present. The

—*Scott Long in* Minneapolis Morning Tribune.

Disc Jockey.

author lists seven "strategies" or policy shifts that range from advocacy of immediate world revolution to collaboration with Hitler, and include "united fronts" with non-Communists, as well as excoriation of those same non-Communists. Does any pattern of Communist behavior emerge from Mr. Ebon's examination of Communist activity?

It would seem that the only pattern of Communist conduct is the absence of pattern and the embarrassing unpredictability of Moscow's gyrations. But through all the amazing flip-flop the goals remain the same: power, and service to the Soviet dictatorship. These loyalties conflict with others, with the loyalty to principle, for instance. They make for strange bedfellows. Mr. Ebon finds that "The Third Strategy of Communism ["Revolutionary Extremism as Protection for Russia"] actually facilitated the Hitler *coup d'état* of 1933." He quotes a well-known German Communist publication of 1945 which says, "It was a mistake to thrust our main strength against the Social Democracy, as that merely aided the Nazis. . . . It was a mistake to rant against the Left Social Democrats. . . . It was a mistake to split the trade unions. . . ."

By these mistakes the Communists helped to lift Hitler into office.

But having confessed their errors of 1933 in 1945, the German Communist Party immediately commenced to repeat them, to concentrate their attack on the Social Democrats, and to admit Nazis into their ranks. The author shows that the Communist parties of Germany, Hungary, and Italy, to name only a few, have admitted former Fascists: "One of the most spectacular cases has been that of Curzio Malaparte, the former Italian Fascist propagandist."

It appears that totalitarians attract totalitarians and repel democrats. There is much in common between Fascists and Communists: belief in the infallibility of the dictator, belief in the necessity of a monopoly of political power and the crushing of all opposition, belief in mass as against man, pursuit of ends without regard to means, glorification of hate, etc.

Martin Ebon also asks the intriguing question: "What makes a Communist?" The concept of a Communist used to be of a revolutionary internationalist, a working man or friend of the working man who wished to overthrow capitalism and build a new, progressive society. Nowadays, however, a Communist will defend nationalism, national sovereignty, and imperialism; he will attack internationalism and world government. He apologizes for Russia's hostility to coeducation, birth control, modern art, and freedom of speech. He promises, in France and Italy, to protect private property.

What then makes a Communist? Mr. Ebon offers social, political, and economic, and, above all, psychological explanations. "The Communist has found a framework of organization and ideology that promises and often provides peace of mind." The Communist "substitutes emotional reaction for cool reasoning." The only trouble is that the peace of mind rarely lasts very long.

With all his rejection of Communism, Mr. Ebon does not think Communists should be suppressed. It doesn't do any good. They carry on anyway. The Canadian atomic spy thefts were perpetrated by Communists while their party was illegal. There is complete freedom in Soviet Russia as there was complete freedom in Nazi Germany to agree with the dictator. But democracy is the freedom to disagree. To weaken Communism, strengthen democracy.

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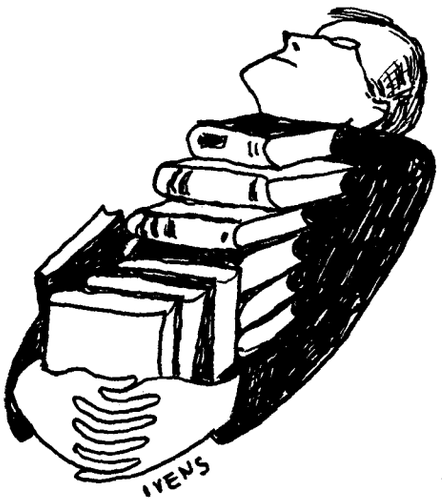
When They Could Have Opinions

RUSSIAN RADICALS LOOK TO AMERICA, 1825-1894. By David Hecht. Cambridge: The Harvard University Press. 1947. 242 pp. $4.

Reviewed by ASHER BRYNES



WE'VE all winced when some English story teller's idea of an American opened its mouth and began to talk the native language. Here's a novelty even more grotesque: six Russians trying to think about the United States a hundred years ago, when six Russians could have six opinions.

These were the titanic figures who came before Lenin. Only two of them are familiar: Alexander Herzen, whose charming but politically unimportant autobiography was translated twenty years ago, and Michael Bakunin, whose name and notions have been kept alive by his violent and discreditable quarrel with Karl Marx. The others—Chernyshevski, Ogarev, Chaikovski, and Lavrov—were socialists of such various coloration that Mr. Hecht cannot make up his mind whether to call them radicals or revolutionaries. But on all other points he is cocksure, bobbing up everywhere as the omnipresent seventh man of the collection, reaping the differences and pounding them, with the hammer and sickle of academic Stalinism, into one little sack of strictly orthodox mash. An unusual book to be published by the most distinguished of our university presses.

Of course the temptations were—shall we say—very powerful. Everybody wants to square Vishinsky's verbal dynamite before it leads to an "incident" of the kind which detonates another and another and another so quickly no one can argue about what happened and postpone, adjourn, investigate, report, and re-argue the next explosion. Everybody wants to do that so long as it's humanly possible; but Mr. Hecht's errors, and his bias, are inhuman.

Consider the following. Mr. Hecht says that "the Decembrist uprising seems to have made little impression upon Bakunin at the time when it happened." Bakunin was eleven years old when it happened. "By 1838," continues Mr. Hecht, "he had embraced Hegelianism, although one-sidedly." Which side is not specified: an important thing to know because Bakunin said the same thing about the other Hegelians. Of Herzen, who wrote some pleasant things about America, he remarks, "This was a precious judgment from a man who loved and understood his own country." Herzen's understanding must have overcome his liking, for he said on many occasions that Russia was an Eastern barbarism, and he spent all his adult life out of it. Of Chernyshevski, whose comment on America was also favorable, Mr. Hecht remarks severely, "He failed to observe that women were excluded from the 'classless' American elections." Of Ogarev, who believed that people require freedom of speech and religion (as in America) for their furthest development he says, "These passages tend to illustrate the conservative-constitutionalist streak in the Russian radical [meaning pre-Marxist] intelligentsia."

We may end this all-too-brief catalogue with Mr. Hecht's criticism of the Russian who saw something to praise in our railroads: "[He] was again overlooking such aspects of the American situation as the role of speculation in railroad enterprise, which often led to collapse and panic." It also led to railroads, of which we have heard in another place that there are not enough.

On every point of any consequence—the influence of the frontier federalism, the doctrine of the separation of powers, the Bill of Rights—to name but a few—Mr. Hecht brings in his demurrer. These things are not what we thought they were, nor are they what the six Russians thought they were. We stagger away wondering why Harvard and Mr. Hecht thought it worth while to resurrect those six Russians.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

In each of the twenty familiar quotations below the name of a fruit or vegetable has been omitted. Can you fill in the blanks? Allowing five points for each correct answer, a score of sixty is par, seventy is very good, and eighty or better is excellent. Answers are on page 27.

1. Oh, those .....! If he's able we're to have a feast; so nice!
2. I live on toasted lizards, prickly ....., and parrot gizzards.
3. Better be jocund with the fruitful ....., than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.
4. She stood breast high among the .....
5. About the woodlands I will go to see the ..... hung with snow.
6. While he from forth the closet brought a heap of candied apple, quince, and ....., and gourd.
7. When the mist was on the ..... fields, an' the sun was droppin' low, she'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing "Kulla-lo-lo!"
8. They dined on mince and slices of .....
9. The ..... tree is in blossom and one small flower has dropped upon my bosom.
10. The breeze comes whispering in our ear that ..... has sprouted.
11. When the frost is on the ..... and the fodder's in the shock.
12. What ..... icy-cold piled on a dish of gold too huge for me to hold!
13. Her hair that lay along her back was yellow like ripe .....
14. Hunger not of the belly kind that's banished with bacon and .....
15. Comfort me with .....: for I am sick of love.
16. Every night my prayers I say, and get my dinner every day, and every day that I've been good I get an ..... after food.
17. No ..... that's kindly ripe could be so round, so plump, so soft, as she; nor half so full of juice!
18. Now when they got as far as the Equator, they'd nothing left but one split .....
19. With thy red lip, redder still, kissed by ..... on the hill.
20. Nine ..... rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee, and live alone in the bee-loud glade.

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Americana. *How many of you heard Russell Conwell deliver his famous Chautauqua lecture, "Acres of Diamonds"? "Money is power," thundered Dr. Conwell, "money has power. This is a wonderfully great life, and you ought to spend your time getting money, because of the power there is in money. Now, when a man could have been rich just as well, and he is now weak because he is poor, he has done some great wrong; he has been untruthful to himself; he has been unkind to his fellow men. . . ." Dr. Conwell spoke the values of the victorious, expanding, booming North in the money-grabbing days after the Civil War. The defeated South, left to struggle to its feet again in agrarian isolation, is only now coming into its own.*

Chautauqua—American Phenomenon

WE CALLED IT CULTURE. By Victoria Case and Robert Ormond Case. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 272 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HERBERT ASBURY

IN THE gaudy debunking days of the 1920's and the early 1930's, one of the favorite targets of the bright young men who wrote for Mr. Mencken's *American Mercury* and its imitators was Chautauqua. They derided it as the apogee of banality, the playground of yokels, and a sort of intellectual soothing syrup especially prepared for the Bible Belt. Their strictures were true enough as far as they went, for some aspects of Chautauqua, especially in its latter years, were certainly banal enough for anybody. But they presented only one side of a many-sided movement. Here in this fine book is the whole picture of Chautauqua, a thorough, well-written, and competently-organized account of an American phenomenon which is without parallel elsewhere in the world. It could be read with profit and enjoyment by every American who is interested in the cultural development of his country, and some twenty million of our citizens could read it with nostalgic affection. There are at least that many who will remember the great days when, from a Chautauqua platform, they heard their first good music, saw their first production of a great play, and listened in awe while prominent men and women lecturers brought to the small towns, for the first time, a general knowledge of the vast outside world.

The truth is that Chautauqua was a cultural force of considerable importance. As the Cases put it,

> Chautauqua was rooted in a thirst for knowledge. At first it was religious knowledge, but the horizon soon broadened to encompass all the arts. It was a tradition that remained unshaken to the end. Even in her shoddy later days, when she descended to the noisy level of the vaudeville circuit, Chautauqua never completely laid aside her trappings of respectability or failed in her virtuous duty to "uplift" and "inspire." . . . Before Chautauqua there was scarcely such a thing as adult education, but before the movement collapsed extension courses, summer schools, and correspondence study had spread throughout the country, all more or less based upon the patterns originated when Chautauqua was founded in upstate New York in 1874.

All this uplift, knowledge, and inspiration were poured out to millions of Americans every summer—in 1924, the peak year, an estimated thirty-five million people heard Chautauqua in 12,000 towns—by men and women who were either important then or have since become so. Many got their start on the Chautauqua platform. Carl Akeley and Vilhjalmar Stefansson, noted explorers, were circuit regulars; and so were Drew Pearson, whose father managed the Swarthmore circuits; Robert M. La Follette, Senator George Norris, Senator Alben Barkley, Al Smith, Eugene V. Debs, William Howard Taft, Herbert Hoover, Vice-President Thomas R. Marshall, Champ Clark, Edna Ferber, Stephen Leacock, Walter Lippmann, James Whitcomb Riley, Irvin S. Cobb, Winston Churchill, Prince William of Sweden, and Ida M. Tarbell.

And, of course, those remarkable standbys William Jennings Bryan, the Silver-Tongued Orator; and Dr. Russell H. Conwell, whose "Acres of Diamonds" was the most famous of all inspirational lectures. Bryan never changed his tune, and had few assets save his Voice, but for more than twenty-five years he was the best drawing-card the lecture platform has ever known; he was "good for forty acres of parked Fords anywhere, at any time of the day or night." Dr. Conwell delivered "Acres of Diamonds," which is printed in the Case book as an appendix, 6,000 times at fees ranging from $150 to $500. The proceeds of his platform appearances should have made him a multimillionaire but he disapproved of inherited riches and great accumulations of wealth, and he practised what he preached. With a part of his huge income he put hundreds of poor boys through college; with the remainder he founded Temple University and Samaritan Hospital in Philadelphia.

Chautauqua meant music and the drama, too, in thousands of small towns and villages where the theatre had always been considered a device of the devil; and where the only music heard was that provided by the village band, the parlor organs, the fiddlers at the country dances, and an occasional gramophone record. The anti-drama barriers were broken down gradually, and Chautauqua was finally able to present full-fledged performances of plays and light operas. There were no anti-music barriers to demolish; the people were starved for music. And mostly they wanted good music; famous singers, bands, and orchestras traveled the circuits every year. Selections most frequently requested by Chautauqua audiences in 1921 for instance, included compositions by Beethoven, Rubenstein, Dvorak, Wagner, Handel, and Mendelssohn. It is true that some of this music is now considered old hat, but just compare it with the jangling discords that fill the air today.

This book should prove of great value to students of the American scene. It is surprising that it hasn't been written before. But it is fortunate that the task of writing it fell into the Cases' capable hands.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 724)

MACKAYE:
*LINCOLN CENTENARY ODE**

God give us
.....
such as breathe
Still of the trail, the redwood,
and the ranch,
.....
And cities where the stars can
still look in
And leave their benediction;
common men
Kindled by Nature's awe to
contemplation
And by her goads to courage.

*Delivered Feb. 1909 at The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Academy of Music, Brooklyn.

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Cultural Entity

THE SOUTH OLD AND NEW: A History, 1820-1947. By Francis Butler Simkins. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1948. 527 pp. $6.

Reviewed by NANCY H. MACLENNAN

THE PURPOSE of this book is to trace the political and social traits that make the thirteen Southern states of this nation "a cultural province conscious of its identity." To do this, the author focuses on the years 1820 through 1947, analyzing the Southland in terms of race, politics, religion, education, art, war and peace, economics, and code. His Southern picture is panoramic, ranging from Communism to the TVA. He has summoned a host of witnesses to attest this picture, witnesses who are identified in footnotes and bibliography, who all but tell Dr. Simkins's history for him. Several well-selected illustrations and maps contribute to the work.

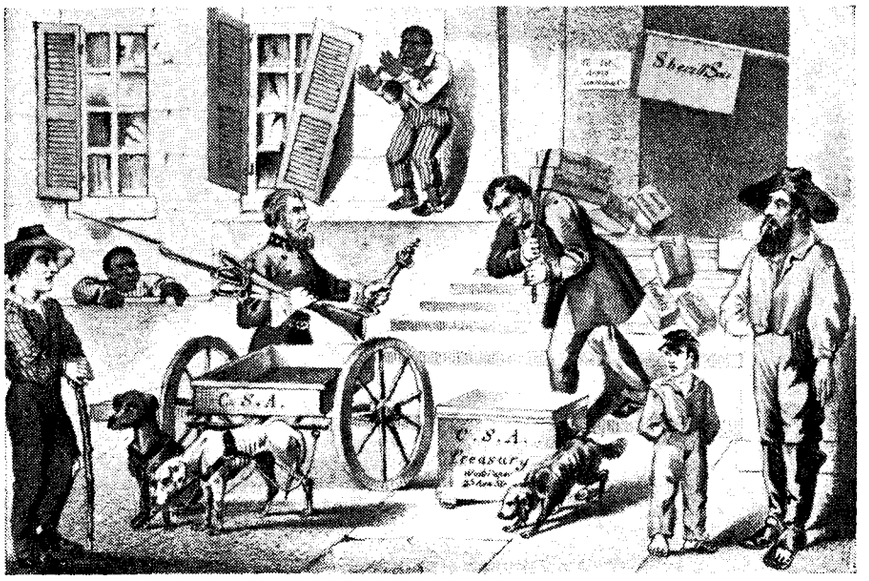
Dr. Simkins, who has written or co-authored four other important books on the South, has achieved in this latest one an effect more dynamic than the avowed academic purpose. To depict the South as a self-conscious cultural entity, if not as a living kind of regional being, perhaps, was a relatively easy assignment for Dr. Simkins. An associate professor of history at the Virginia State Teachers College, Dr. Simkins was born in South Carolina and is descended from an early Southern family. The impact of his newest book lies not in the excellence of his regional portrait but in the political interest that he arouses.

Pervading Dr Simkins's book is his conception of the Southerner as a unique and self-contained American type, indeed the only "complete soul" our variegated, multi-national society has created. In such characteristics as the Southerner's belief in white supremacy he has not changed in the last 127 years, Dr. Simkins writes. With statistics and significant detail, he brings to life the nineteenth-century plantation, the slave system, the Civil War, the Reconstruction, the modern Negro, and the South's economic growing-pains; its loyalty to states' rights, its peculiar chivalry, its aristocracy, its piety, and its prejudice. Within the framework of this legend emerges a realistic procession of famous individual Southerners: Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, Booker T. Washington, Huey Long, John Nance Garner, James F. Byrnes, and many, many others.

Objectivity is Dr. Simkins's key stylistic talent. Although he is a Southerner, and one who lost a grandfather in the Civil War, the author avoids sentimentality in his moving summary of General Lee's surrender to General Grant at Appomattox. In his chapter on Southern literature, Dr. Simkins X-rays the success of Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind," and finds, coincidentally, that here, too, "objectivity does not surrender to sentimentality." Generally, the author seems fair—with one notable exception. Those who regard the memory of President Lincoln as something more or less sacred may be profoundly shocked by Dr. Simkins's suggestion that the Great Emancipator was really a "double-talking" warmonger.

Dr. Simkins should have placed more emphasis than he has done on the actual and potential contribution of the South to American welfare, nationally and as to world peace. And he allows himself to be victimized by his own talent for objectivity, which finally recoils on him leaving him without a message or a moral with which to end his book. As an expert on the South, his failure to offer his own answer, or any partial solution, to the Negro problem today is most disappointing, especially since the book wears such a mien of authenticity and authority.

The South is where, at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the greatest weapon of modern war was forged—the atom bomb. The same South contains America's greatest scientific laboratory for peace. By solving the Negro problem in its own land, the United States Government will be able to speak with real authority in the great human rights cases before the UN.



—*The Bettmann Archive.*

General Moving Day in Richmond, Va. [May 1, 1865]: "If they had been wise enough to give the best-educated Negroes the vote, if . . . if . . . if . . ."

Controversial Period

THE SOUTH DURING RECONSTRUCTION, 1865-1877. By E. Merton Coulter. Vol. VIII of A History of the South. Edited by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1947. 426 pp. $5.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS of the South, which far exceeds that of any other section, finds many expressions—in the fiction of Erskine Caldwell and Eudora Welty, in the defiant interpretations like "I'll Take My Stand" and "The Advancing South," in the books of warning like Gerald Johnson's "The Wasted Land," in Rupert B. Vance's studies in human geography and the economic writings of Broadus Mitchell, in such able sociological works as Arthur F. Raper's "Preface to Peasantry," and in the broad philosophical surveys of Howard W. Odum. No other region, not even New England, has so much reason for self-consciousness. None has had such a separate history, nor such a tragic history. None has had such a persistent and little-changing culture; the South is still mainly agrarian, still mainly Anglo-Saxon, still largely Jeffersonian. No other section has such numerous and terrible problems peculiar to itself. It is right that the South should produce an immense literature upon its special traits, experiences, and perplexities; and we may be grateful that it is a literature full of thrust, color, and

(*Continued on page* 26)

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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Thomas W. Lamont

IN THE last and recent talk I had with my friend Thomas W. Lamont, he told me that journalism had been his first love, and might be his last. "Not," he said, "that my life as a banker has not been enjoyable and interesting to a high degree, but I intended to become a newspaperman, and the desire has never quite died."

This was the reason, so he said, that he had bought *The New York Evening Post* in 1918, hoping to run it himself, and it was not his duties in J. P. Morgan and Co. that prevented this so much as the call of his country to serve on so many commissions and on so many urgent missions abroad in the trouble-breeding Twenties.

It was no desire for power and certainly no hope of profits that led him to salvage the old *Literary Review* from the *Post* when he sold that paper, and to finance its resurrection in *The Saturday Review of Literature*. No wonder he made an ideal patron for a staff of editors with a new and enthusiastic magazine to develop. Never in all those years—and some of them, when the Depression came on, very expensive years—did he fail in constant interest and sympathy. Never in a single instance did he bring anything which could most remotely be regarded as pressure upon our editorial staff. I know, from himself and others, that the liberal opinions of some of our reviewers grieved some of his professional friends. He realized that a liberal paper must expect attacks from both radicals and conservatives, and backed us up, not by word so much as by deed. And every now and then he would write a review of some important book on economic or financial history so broad in its scope, so firm in its grasp, so piercing in its perception of the essential problem, that the rest of the number faded to gray beside it. I have no doubt that Mr. Lamont was one of our greatest bankers, but if he had followed his first love and become a critic and historian of affairs, he would have been numbered among the most important writers of his generation.

Mr. Lamont was my friend, and I cannot end this brief tribute in terms of service, however great. He will surely be numbered among that not too large group of men who made capitalism work for the advantage of the commonwealth in what was evidently its greatest century. And this in contrast to many other leaders whose benefits to mankind were often an accident of the struggle for wealth and power. This means that he had character. General Stilwell in his memoirs says that character is eighty per cent of effective generalship. It accounted for at least eighty per cent of Thomas W. Lamont's success in leadership. But arithmetic fails here as in most statistical measures, for I should assign another eighty per cent to sheer intellect, to vision, and to ideals, not conventional but firmly held.

Personally, he was a man of infinite kindness and equal charm. He had a quality of steel which one saw only occasionally but which in a glimpse measured the man as a master of affairs and a leader of men. He was no sword waver, but the power was there. Indeed, in my own contacts with him, I remember best the humorous shrewdness with which he judged books and their significance, and in his later years a sweetness which made him an estimable companion. It is a privilege to have lived in the same generation with such a man.

H. S. C.

Gandhi

By William Rose Benét

VIOLENCE killed Good.
But Violence dies.
The pure, the martyred blood
Speaks to the skies.

Violence slew Peace.
And through all ages hence
Men shall not cease
To mourn this Violence.

The Silence knows.
The sacred river flows.
The light that was the Savior
Grows and grows and grows. . . .

A World Not All Wrong

NOW, AS after the first European struggle, it is from the young that some of the most significant writing of the time is coming. And now, as then, it is the literature of discontent and protest that is significant. But there is a difference in the general slant of the writing of the present and that of twenty-five years ago, a difference that was inevitable in view of the mood which those earlier writers had created and the new issues which the Second World War had injected into the minds of men. They—the post-World War I writers—had come back from battle to a land which in their dreams had been perfection only to find it far other than they had envisioned it, and as a result to eat the bitter herb of disillusionment. They spoke their wrath and disappointment in no uncertain words, and if in their indignation they sometimes lost perspective, they nevertheless roused the public to an awareness of the ills they fought, and they won for themselves that new freedom which embraced an open facing of sores and ills which convention had hitherto politely ignored.

Their sons and daughters were born to this new freedom which to them was neither strange nor remarkable. When their turn came to follow in the path of their fathers to a struggle the latter had thought to make forever impossible, they went under no illusions as to the perfections of their home land; they went, indeed, hardened to stress and suffering by the tragic experience of depression which had denied to them the normal expectation of youth for work and success. And they went from a land which had become acclimated to new philosophies and concerned rather than startled by the new frankness.

In 1920, Freudianism and its aftermath in literary appraisal and interpretation were in their dawn so far as the American public went. American history was being rewritten in terms of the new psychology and American fiction was profoundly affected by it. After the adventures of war, excitement no longer lay in physical danger; what remained unexplored and so enthralling was the secret places of the soul. The era of "debunking" of history, in line with the belittling portrayal of the American scene in fiction, was accompanied in both by an intense interest in the workings of the human psyche. Science, too, had not yet achieved the full measure of its application to practical purposes which it so spectacularly reached in the quarter century

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"The 'Little Men' of Literature"

SIR: It's been a long, long time since my eyes followed lines and my mind feasted upon truths like those in "The 'Little Men' of Literature" [*SRL* Jan. 17]. I used to read Carlyle and crack my heels together; then, later, "The Human Situation," by W. Macneile Dixon; but now comes this, and it's a tonic for the soul. I have now a new sense of peace and satisfaction in the thought that there are artists in the earth with brains and a respectable measure of integrity.

I shall lay this article up in a handy place where I can reach and read it from time to time, just to remind myself that men with intelligence still live and write.

MATCHETT Y. POYNTER.

Elizabeth, N. J.

SIR: At one time or another I have read some amusing variations on that basic gag about the flea and the elephant, but never have I seen it put with so straight a face as when Ben Lucien Burman, author of "Steamboat 'Round the Bend," writes disparagingly in your columns of James Joyce, author of "Dubliners" and "Ulysses." "Little men," eh?

DENNIS CHAMBERS.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: If writer Ben Burman will take time out to remove the shade of prejudice smothering his mind, he will find himself steeped in a contradiction. In condemning Joyce and Stein without mercy, he is guilty of the very thing he is so energetically preaching against: narrowness.

STANLEY DEVAURS.

San Francisco, Calif.

SIR: Why did Ben Lucien Burman have to go ahead and spoil his article with that reference to the poisonous belt of vapor "like that of the Wellsian legend"? What he means is one of the Professor Challenger stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle... quite a bit superior to Mr. Wells in every respect.

WILLY LEY.

Washington, D. C.

The Mystery of Marlowe

SIR: "Want to Become a Literary Genius?" [*SRL* Jan. 10] has quite adequately solved the mystery of the missing Robert Marlowe.

I suppose that all writing schools receive stories similar to "The Shark." When Mr. Marlowe submitted his story to me, I told him the naked truth. But at this stage, Mr. Marlowe neatly crossed me up. It seems that tyro writers rarely get the truth from so-called schools, so when I have the effrontery to tell them to forget writing and concentrate on a trade, they *always* write back, asking me if I think I'm God. But Mr. Marlowe was the exception. He didn't write back.

Frankly, I've been worrying. I had begun to think that my criticism of the abortive "Shark" had been too strong for Mr. Marlowe's sensitive soul. I have fearfully watched the Boston papers for word that Mr. Marlowe had flung himself into the Charles River.

Now, however, I see that Mr. Marlowe was only doing an exposé on writing schools and that he looked upon my letter of criticism as something "refreshingly frank." Your reproduction of my letter in your magazine is the first wordage of mine in some 2,000,000 published words for which I have not been paid. But since I no longer have Mr. Marlowe's blood upon my hands, I am happy to condone it.

DUANE YARNELL.

Daytona Beach, Fla.

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"Couldn't I just put them up in town? Who'd see them way out in Sherwood Forest?"

Nobody Wants Tripe

SIR: I don't think the public wants tripe [*SRL* Nov. 22]. I'm part of the reading public and I'm bored silly by most of the stuff I read. The editors don't want tripe either. They'd like nothing better than to print issue after issue of readable, interesting stories dealing with basic human problems. Never in the history of the written word has there been so large an audience eager for good writing. Never have editors been so hospitable to new writers with something to say. There are still taboos in the big magazines. You can't sell a story about perversion, incest, rape, extreme cruelty, nor any story calculated to induce religious hatred. Nor any story in which people wish they didn't have to live in the United States when things are so ducky over there in Germany or Russia or Spain.

What is there left to write about? Merely the same old things, the relationships between or among people, the striving for human contact, the struggle between good and evil, between materialism and idealism, self-sacrifice and exploitation, frustration and self-realization, the triumph of courage over pain, of human dignity over poverty. And again and again, the miracle of falling in love, or finding a partner for life. If you have something to say and can say it well, you'll find an audience. *The Ladies' Home Journal* printed a story about a half-breed. *The Woman's Home Companion* has printed more than one story treating Negroes as human beings, not just race problems. *Collier's* printed a magnificent story about a Jewish refugee girl in Palestine. *Good Housekeeping* printed a story about a juvenile delinquent that was straight from the shoulder and absolutely realistic. The *Post* had a grim one about an exploited child. *The American Magazine* printed a story about a cripple who married a pretty little tramp. (And the author was a young writer named Marian Champagne, which proves that you don't have to be Irwin Shaw or Libby Block or Pearl Buck to get a hearing.)

I'm getting bored with the self-pity of writers who blame Conditions for their lousy work.

MARIAN CHAMPAGNE.

Albany, N. Y.

St. Ignatius of Antioch

SIR: In my review of "The Fathers of the Church" [*SRL* Jan. 31] I inadvertently referred to "The Letters of St. Antioch." The title should have read "The Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch."

ROBERT PICK.

New York, N. Y.

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Seeing Things

FOR ART'S SAKE

IT HAD sounded like a perfect solution. And Sunday afternoon is a problem which needs solving. The Lord may have rested on the Sabbath, but modern parents living in large cities find it hard to do so. Their children, though responsible, should not be blamed. Doors opening on backyards were meant for them. So was the freedom of the country, and the altitude of rural skies. Roofs, especially the low ceilings of New York apartments, fit with comfort only over grown-up heads.

The morning of the Sabbath is simple enough. Sunday school takes care of that. It empties a dwelling of small fry at an unreasonably early hour. The quiet thus established can be prolonged even after they return. I mean during that perilous interval of waiting for midday dinner. It is then that, with the closing of the front door, immaculate blue suits can inexplicably become coated with lint. It is then that hands, for once white, develop a talent for discovering anthracite in spotless rooms. It is then that brushed hair for no apparent reason suddenly becomes unbrushed as if in a movie shown backwards. It is then, too, that toy guns dislodge the air already made fragrant by chemistry sets.

Peace *can* be maintained even during this period of waiting. In uptown Manhattan, it can be achieved in so honorable and pleasant a fashion as encircling the reservoir—provided, of course, the children can be cajoled into walking. Or it can be bought contemptibly by administering a few new comics, those sure Mickey Finns for the young. Sunday afternoon is, however, quite another matter. Its difficulties multiply when the pursuit of culture takes abrupt possession of a parent's mind.

"I'll tell you what," I had said, straining to be heard in bedlam. Dinner was long over. So was the illusion of quiet following it. The hubbub from the boys' bedrooms had tumultuously announced that even their naps (periods of resting and reading rather than of sleeping, but still beautiful in their noiselessness) had come to a martial end. "Let's go to the Metropolitan Museum," I beamed, "and see the French Tapestries."

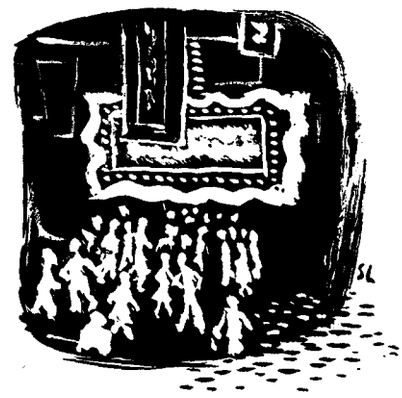
As an improvisation, this had seemed beckoning enough. At least it had to me. My wife was struggling to read a book. She deserved quiet and, since, for once, I had a free afternoon, I determined she should get it.

"Why, Dad?" asked the younger boy.

"Oh, gosh, Dad," groaned the older one, "I wanted to go to the movies."

I must have been tired. Very tired. My nerves at journey's end. Any child psychologist would have abandoned me as a hopeless case.

"Well, you're NOT going," I



snapped. "You're going to the Metropolitan. Furthermore, you're going to love it."

At that fatal moment pleasure became obligation, and the afternoon more complicated. I had not meant to say it. I am not ordinarily so Elder Moulton-Barrett. I recognized it at sound for the mistake it was. But parents' words are the hardest to eat.

"What are tapestries?" asked the younger boy.

"You'll soon find out. They are very beautiful. They are woven and they tell stories about knights and kings. Yes, and unicorns," I added, knowing of his susceptibility to animals.

"Who wants to see sewing?" snarled the older boy.

"I do," said his brother, "I'll go."

"You're darn right you'll go," said I, surprising even myself by my Bismarckian attitude.

"I'll go too," said the older boy, "but I won't go if *he* goes."

This fratricidal note was utterly unexpected. It did not uncomplicate matters.

"We won't discuss it," I replied haughtily, as many a parent has done before me and will do in the future. I turned to the older boy. "We're going downstairs and if you're not there in two minutes, I'll—well, you'll be —sorry."

I realized the threat, as phrased, left much to be desired. It had about it a "for God, for country, and for Yale" quality of anticlimax. The boys' faces told me they had sensed this, too.

When my younger son and I left the apartment, there was no sign that the older one was following. For a Milquetoast second I waited at the front door. It is one of the world's blessings that children never realize how much their parents dread having to go through with the threats of punishment they distribute in unguarded moments.

"Well," said I to the younger boy, "I don't think he's coming. Let's get going."

So we started walking up the street. Lot's wife never stole more longing backward glances than I did.

"Don't look," I whispered after what seemed to me an agonizing time. "It's your brother. He's following us on the far side of the street."

There he was pretending not to see us, while we pretended not to see him. I could only remember the countless times in my own youth when in rages, the provocation of which I used to forget upon leaving the house, I had had to keep on walking alone for blocks. Feeling very foolish. Hoping I might be run over so that all would be forgiven. Wondering how this silly crisis could ever be settled. Yet trusting with my whole bursting heart that it would be—soon.

The wide steps and the turnstile at the Metropolitan solved this for him and us. We came together as if we had never parted. Sheepish, smiling ridiculous smiles, but saying nothing.

Having admitted to myself that I was in error, I determined to make the kind of concession that an older person can make with dignity. "Let's go to the Egyptian Room first. There are lots of mummies there."

At this their eyes brightened, as I knew they would.

"Goody," cried the little boy. "Can we see their bones?"

"Yes," said I temptingly, "and their faces which look like dried apricots. They're wonderful." I hoped this would do the trick. It did.

I RECALLED that my sons had been somewhat previous in manifesting that interest in horror which appears, alas, to be common among civilized beings. When very little, each of them had delighted in watching me shave. Although at first I had thought that they had joined me out of companionship, I soon discovered the real reason. Every morning they would follow the razor as it scraped my throat.

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ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA
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LENORE ULRIC—RALPH CLANTON
Staged by GUTHRIE McCLINTIC
Martin Beck, W. 45. Evs. 8:15. Mat. Wed & Sat

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CORONET Thea., W. 49 St. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

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PAUL KELLY in
COMMAND DECISION
with
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PAUL McGRATH
FULTON, W. 46th St. Evgs. 8:40. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:40.

And every morning they would ask, hopefully, "Any blood, Daddy?" The blissful mornings had been those when the lather was at least pinkened.

"Egypt," said I with the guidebook to the Egyptian Collection in my hands, as we turned to the right in the Great Hall, "Egypt is an old, a very old country." Without meaning to have it do so, my voice took on charabanc tones. These did not reverberate long. For one thing, I had to consult the guidebook. For another, I noticed with gratitude that, having patted the red sphinx of Queen Hatshepsut as if it were "Chessie's" larger sister, the boys had raced to hide in the Old Kingdom tombs.

When I caught up with them, I heard the younger one ask his brother, "Where are the dead people?" He did not answer. He was too busy experimenting with echoes. Nor did the younger one appear to mind. He was running up and down the narrow corridor with relish.

BY THE time we emerged from the tombs I had peeked into the guidebook sufficiently to surprise myself by the assurance with which I referred to the Old, the Middle, and the New Kingdoms. Egyptian history has always eluded me. Oh, I share with everyone else images of lotus and papyrus leaves, mummy cases, obelisks, wall paintings, monolithic mortals, cat-faced deities, great columns at Luxor, the Pyramids, and sphinxes of varying dimensions. But for me Egyptian history is a skeleton with no spine and very few ribs. The femur and the humerus are also missing.

I know that one of the Ptolemies had a theory and I know the theory, but which Ptolemy had it I never can, for his life or mine, remember. On the subject of Tutankhamen, who keeps merging with Lord Carnarvon in my mind, I am as much of an authority as the next newspaper reader of my generation. I feel on somewhat surer ground with Potiphar and his wife (Pauline Frederick played her when I saw "Joseph and His Brethren"); and much surer with Cleopatra (Helen Hayes or Vivien Leigh when kittenish, Katharine Cornell when mature). But, except for where they have impinged upon Shaw, Shakespeare, crossword puzzles, the Bible, and *Life* magazine, I find the impressive hyphenated names of Egyptian history have a way of remaining unswervingly Egyptian. Try as I may to master them, Meket-Re, Se'n-Wosret the Second (or the First, for that matter), and Thut-mose III refuse for me to do anything more than abuse the alphabet.

I am afraid, therefore, I was a most inadequate guide. Not that it mattered. I had a far harder time keeping

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up with the boys than with Egyptian history. They were always at least one room ahead of me in search of mummies. The mummy cases, which were frequent, seemed to them (as I must admit they seemed to me) a snare and a delusion. They were either pried open and empty, or kept sealed hermetically. I could only think of Lenin and what had happened in Moscow in the summer of 1928, when I expressed my wish to visit his tomb.

"You can't see him now," a Soviet official had replied. "He's closed for repairs."

The clay-colored and flaking survivors of the Nile which, from memories of previous visits, I had offered as bait had apparently flaked away. With them had gone their tattered winding sheets. Only their multicolored inner and outer coffins remained. These and the goodies and gadgets thoughtfully supplied for their long journey.

Although the boys liked such models as the one of Hatshepsut's Temple, they made no proper obeisance as they passed the statues of Egypt's monarchs. They showed a mild interest in the jewel collection and mustered some curiosity in the little toy boats in which Egyptian dolls did everything but feather their oars. My sons' constant dog-trotting search, however, was more for cadavers than for loveliness.

I had tried to talk with them of the dignity and serenity, the mystery and the majesty of beauty as the Egyptians had created it. I tried in vain. The only art for which they showed any enthusiasm was the mortician's. As the boys became increasingly mutinous, in despair I found myself going up to guard after guard muttering, "For God's sake, where are the mummies that used to be here? As a parent I need them." The responses of the guards ranged from explanations of the effect of New York's climate on the Ptolemaic great to statements of frank surprise that our group morbidity was not gratified by caskets. Finally one kind custodian assured me and my sons that, at the end of the corridor in which we then were, a wonderful, somewhat fleshy skeleton could be found. Once again I hotfooted after the young. Sure enough, there he was, that deliquescent, though dried, Egyptian. At least there was a passable reconstruction of him, all shriveled bones and tobacco-leaf flesh, crouched fetically in a sarcophagus.

THUS charmed, my sons were willing thereafter to head upstairs for the French Tapestries. I did my best to beguile them with the stories of the Apocalypse as commissioned by the Duke of Anjou in 1357. But, since the crowd was like the shuttle during the rush hour and the boys were small, I could not blame them for being impassive to St. John as he took a little book from the seventh angel and ate it (Revelation 10: 8-10). In a later room their eyes glistened as they saw poor St. Stephen in the process of being arrested and stoned, having his body watched by beasts, and later being removed to a church in Jerusalem. Yet the lovely colors and quality of the Unicorn series did not move them. Nor did the charm of the scenes of country life, though they did enjoy the martyrdom of St. Mamas. What was worse, they mustered unmistakable excitement when they looked upon the spread and unshielded posterior of a mortally wounded horse in the series glorifying Louis XIV.

IT WAS in this gallery, however, that the catastrophe occurred. Families should never venture out together without having agreed in advance where to meet in case they are separated. It was in the Louis XIV room that the older boy disappeared. Had he been looking for the minotaur, he could not thereafter have been more lost to me or to his brother. I cannot say that the state of separation added to our esthetic enjoyment for the rest of the afternoon. My fear is that we looked for him first, at the tapestries afterwards. I kept thinking of how Alexander Woollcott, years ago when the Theatre Guild was trying to purchase some tapestries, warned its directors, "The Gobelins will get you if you don't watch out." This recollection did not help.

My younger son and I pushed our way through the crowds for another half-hour. Then we went down the long stairs, hoping to see the older boy. He was nowhere to be found, not in the Armory Halls, not in the Pompeian Court, nor in the men's room for that matter. Recalling how he had started out the afternoon solitary, I was for a moment convinced he must have determined to end it in the same way. So the two of us headed home, stopping for a strangely sour soda, and pretended not to be worried.

He wasn't in the apartment when we returned, although it was dark—Paul Revere dark—outside. Even so, I took a tub, trying to convince myself that he was old enough to get home alone and that whatever worries he had undergone would be good for him. Still he didn't come. I was just dressing, determined to rent a St. Bernard dog and scour the park and beat down the closed doors of the Metropolitan, when he rushed in, whiter of face than a bottle of milk of magnesia.

"You're here," he cried. "Gee, I waited at the foot of those stairs until they shut the place up."

Upon reflection, I couldn't help feeling that the afternoon had not been the best possible initiation into Egyptology or French Tapestries. I

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knew the fault was mainly mine. Yet what fascinated me was the boys' fascination with horror. Was this alarming, I wondered? Was it reprehensible? Was it abnormal? Was it the product of too much intimacy with Mandrake the Magician, Superman, or the modern world as shown in newsreels, movies, and magazines?

PERHAPS over-optimistically, I decided no. The essence of the sublimest tragedy is an identical preoccupation with death. Most mortals, young or old, and in spite of their better instincts, are ambulance-chasers at heart. No adult is so important as the bearer of bad tidings. Anyone relishing life cannot help being concerned with what ends it. The less we know of horror from experience, the more it is apt to delight us in the abstract. To the young, suffering is almost unimaginable, death inconceivable. Pain is not real to them. Violence is. And this, quite naturally, they see as an expression of vigor, a manifestation of health and adventure. No doubt, a measure of our lost innocence, certainly of our growth and our sophistication, is that, though the horrible still fascinates us, our attitude towards it is totally different.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

NEW FICTION

(*Continued from page 15*)

brother to the Chief? Was it, at the last agonized analysis, one of the houseparty itself who had both attacked the woman and thrust the assegai home?

A renegade Scotsman, McSwine, whips up the battle urge in the besieging kaffirs. The description of Zwangendaba, the black witch doctor, is too revolting to be attempted here, a shuddery but masterful piece of characterization. Of course there are girls in the houseparty and lovemaking between bullets and spear thrusts, but the kissing and rutting are kept to a minimum and the virile struggle between besieged and besiegers occupies the center of the stage.

Chapter X, called "The Hounds, the Hares, and the Hounds," is about the best piece of breath-taking, heart-thumping writing anyone would care to come across. The present clouds over as you read, and you climb, pant, stumble, and peer, wriggle through mud, and struggle through tearing thorns with two men, out to get the obscene witch doctor, Zwangendaba.

As for the solution, to the satisfaction of us of the lower brow, the author sets it all down at last and ends our futile guesswork. This brings the book to a close and leaves us hoping that young Mr. Krepps will not take another three years to write his promised sequel.

Marginal Men

THE PATH OF THUNDER. By Peter Abrahams. New York: Harper & Bros. 1948. 278 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by JOHN BARKHAM

IN SOUTH AFRICA, that fair and pleasant land, the word "miscegenation" has a particularly ugly ring. It denotes the unspeakable crime. So unspeakable indeed that the country's Calvinist legislators have written a color bar into the law of the land. They have made the mingling of white and black blood an offense punishable with a mandatory prison term. Nevertheless, in a population of some 11,000,000, a little over 2,000,000 are white and close on a million are "colored," the euphemism for half-breeds. And the number of "God's stepchildren" grows year by year.

It is bad enough to be a Negro in

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South Africa; he exists in a feudal world straight out of the Middle Ages. But socially the colored man is in even worse plight. Despised by the whites, scorned by the blacks, the colored people live precariously in a kind of twilit half-world of their own.

"The Path of Thunder," the Harper Find of 1948, is a deeply felt novel about this depressed class, by a man who belongs to it. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Abrahams is the first of his race to win a world audience. More power to him. This book, his first to appear in America but actually his fourth, marks his coming-of-age as a novelist. On a visit to South Africa last year I came across some of his earlier work. It impressed me then as powerful and sincere, but deficient in style and discipline. In "The Path of Thunder" Abrahams has matured his approach and refined his utterance.

It is obvious that in this book Abrahams meant to state his people's case in the clearest terms. His Lanny Swartz is a colored youth who, like the novelist himself, received enough education in Cape Town to become a schoolteacher. Turning his back on the bright lights of the city, he returns to his parched Karroo birthplace to bring learning to the colored folk there. The white men who run the village don't like the idea, or the colored upstart who thought of it. Here we have a basic conflict: the white man's resentment for the colored man who tries to better himself.

Lanny is young, good-looking, well-spoken. Up in the big house on the hill lives Sarie Villier, the white man's pretty, fair-haired sister. They fall in love. For a colored man in South Africa this is about the ultimate in aspiration, and Mr. Abrahams is apparently sublimating a whole people's frustration in posing this relationship. He makes his Lanny the white woman's equal in character, learning, and bearing. She returns his love. In present-day South Africa the mere existence of such a relationship bespeaks its own doom. Mr. Abrahams is realist enough to concede that, and brings his story to a tragic climax.

But the fate of his romance is not the gravamen of his charge. This appears in the scorching passages where embittered, addlepated Afrikaaners (Boers) abuse and beat the colored man who has the effrontery to set himself up as their equal. Here the author's own rancor finds burning expression.

He looks at the problem from every side. In one of his finest chapters Lanny argues it out with a Negro and a Jew. All are of the dispossessed, but the Negro has an anchor in his tribe and the Jew in his age-old past. The half-caste is a rootless creature with neither a past nor a future.

All this Mr. Abrahams brings to life with an earthy, elemental simplicity that lends an inner dignity to his tale. He writes with tenderness and passion. If the dialogue sounds awkward and gawky at times, this is probably because he is writing in English but thinking in Afrikaans.

This moving story about South Africa's submerged segment is no pasteboard Technicolor romance, but a perceptive book about one of the country's staggering social problems. It deserves the accolades it will doubtless win. How South Africans will receive it is something else again. Some years ago the South African Government banned Stuart Cloete's "Turning Wheels" for suggesting that the Voortrekkers had done just the kind of thing that brought Mr. Abrahams's colored people into being. Now his open evocation of the supreme taboo may earn him the same kind of distinction. But I doubt whether a little thing like that will hold back a naturally gifted novelist who has come so hard so far.

AMERICANA

(*Continued from page* 19)

variety. From Douglas Freeman's Richmond to Frank Dobie's Austin, the section is full of intellectual energy.

Yet the direction that Southern writing has taken is open to some question. The area has given us too much sociological and economic analysis, too much discussion on contemporaneous problems; it has given us too little history. The South needs to understand its past a little better before it can comprehend its present. Thus far not one of our first-rank historians has come from below the Mason and Dixon Line. (Mr. Freeman's work falls mainly in the category of biography.) Many single historical volumes of great merit have been written by Southern pens. The section, however, has never given the country a Bancroft or a Henry Adams, a Rhodes or a Channing, a Frederic J. Turner or Vernon L. Parrington.

Perhaps the best of its historians, Ulrich B. Phillips, spent practically all his mature life teaching and writing in the North. Down to 1910, indeed, Southern history was all too largely written by Yankees and Middle Westerners. Of recent years recognition of the need for original work has led to the founding of the admirable *Southern Historical Review*, and to much productivity by monograph-writers and university presses. Broad and penetrating surveys of the Southern past, however, are still a desideratum.

The large cooperative work of which this volume is a first instalment promises to do much to fill the gap. Years ago a Confederate veteran, Major G. W. Littlefield, presented a fund to the University of Texas for the collection of materials eventuating in a "full and impartial study of the South and its part in American history." Charles W. Ramsdell, who had received his first training in Southern research under Dunning at Columbia, and who had amassed a tremendous erudition concerning the Civil War and Reconstruction, took charge of the Texas program. He began to lay plans for using his own and other men's learning in carrying out Major Littlefield's intention. At the same time Louisiana State University, which was undertaking a broad program to inspire interest and literary productivity in Southern history, broached the idea of a general history of the South. It was natural for Texas and Louisiana to join hands. Dr. Ramsdell and W. H. Stephenson were chosen joint editors; they made arrangements for a twelve-volume set; and writing began. When Professor Ramsdell died six years ago, Dr. Coulter of the University of Georgia took his editorial position. Now we have the first volume, covering the dozen years of Reconstruction. Others will follow, ranging from the two initial volumes in which Frank Craven and Philip Davidson treat of the Southern colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, respectively, to the two final volumes in which C. Vann Woodward covers the New South 1877-1913, and Rupert B. Vance deals with the present South 1913-1946.

The Reconstruction period is at once the most exciting (except for perhaps the Civil War years), the most depressing, and the most controversial in Southern history. It is exciting in the sense of being full of lurid violence, cataclysmic change, and heroic endurance. It is depressing because it shows a people in defeat, humiliation, and sore distress—often downright misery. It is controversial, of course, because the conflict between radical Northerner and conservative Southerner, between Negro and white, between old ideas and new, threw up a series of fiercely-fought issues on which everybody was partly right and partly wrong. A just treatment of this crowded and chaotic pe-

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riod makes heavy demands upon any writer's scholarship, judgment, and literary skill. Mr. Coulter's book ably meets most of these demands.

Political reconstruction, as the author shows, was a failure; that is, the reconstruction which the Northern radicals tried to impose upon the conquered South broke down, and in time was abandoned. Social and economic reconstruction, on the contrary, was a success; this was the reconstruction which Southern whites and blacks alike, often as harmonious partners, carried out of their own will and motion. Mr. Coulter writes distinctly from the old-fashioned Southern point of view. He rejects most of the interpretations of the period which appear in Du Bois's "Black Reconstruction" and in the *Journal of Negro History,* and clearly thinks that the results would have been far better had the white Southerners (as Lincoln and Andrew Johnson intended) been left free to guide the section's destinies. It may be said that he does not explain clearly enough *why* they were not so left. If they had been wise enough to give the best-educated and propertied Negroes the vote, as Lincoln suggested, if they had abstained from the folly of the worst features of the Black Codes, if they had been less hasty in electing important Confederate officers to high position, and if they had accepted the Fourteenth Amendment, military reconstruction might have been avoided and the Fifteenth Amendment postponed. The Southerners themselves contributed to their plight. It may also be said that Mr. Coulter errs in paying more attention to the good side of the old-time Ku Klux than to the bad side. It may be said that he dismisses much too briefly the benefits of the state constitutions written by carpet-baggers and scalawags; that he does less than justice to the record of the Negro in Congress and in state office. By and large, however, he is unquestionably correct in his conclusions on the bankruptcy of radical reconstruction. His massive array of evidence defies question.

What is most striking about the book, however, is its learned and exhaustive treatment of social, agricultural, educational, and intellectual advances from Appomattox to the full

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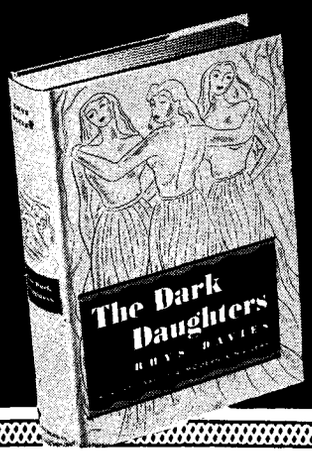

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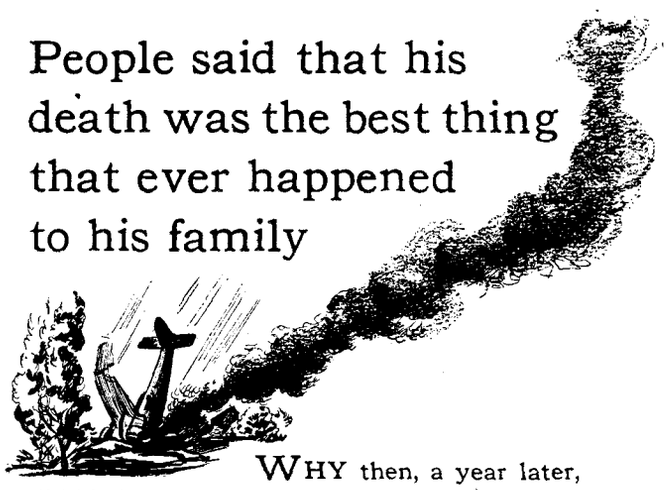

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restoration of self-government in 1877. For two years the South seemed flat on its back. Its people, plunged in poverty, suffering from outrageous Federal levies (Mr. Coulter brings out the full iniquity of the cotton tax), and horrified by the misgovernment of the time, were in despair. Yet by 1868, when a large cotton crop at good prices brought money into the section, the turn toward prosperity was clear. The breakup of the great plantations, or most of them, geared a healthy agricultural reorganization. With the aid of keen Yankee migrants and Northern capital, new cities sprang up or old towns boomed into lusty little metropolitan centers—Atlanta, Birmingham, Chattanooga, Jacksonville, and others. Durham and Lynchburg became thriving tobacco-manufacturing cities; Norfolk an important port; Anniston a made-to-order iron town. Florida developed as a winter resort, and Texas as a great cattle-growing area. Journalism and literature both rose in these dozen years to prouder heights than they had attained during slavery days. They could look ahead to still better days, too, for a free-school system was for the first time taking sturdy root, while by 1880 most old Southern universities were on their feet again, and some important new seats—Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins, Arkansas, the University of the South—had arisen. Negroes played their part in this progress. Mr. Coulter might be more generous at points in his ascription of credit to them, but he does point out how far they advanced in agriculture and in acquisition of property.

The pattern of Mr. Coulter's book is almost entirely topical. Though he begins with a picture of the devastated South, and gives an account of the political mutations of the period, ending in "the disintegration of radicalism," he does not attempt to furnish the story of reconstruction. His chapters, instead, take up one subject after another and exhaust it with little regard to overall chronological development: transportation, cities, and factories, cultural phases, churches, and schools, Negro laborers and landholders, recreation, and so on. In a work covering only twelve years in the life of one section, this topical pattern was unescapable. The lack of a narrative current, however, contributes to the heavy quality of the book. Nobody would call it a highly readable work. Partly because it tells so little of a story, partly because it scants the interpretative elements, partly because of a certain monotony in the presentation of an imense mass of facts, it fails of any inspiring qualities. More feeling, more fire, and more stylistic quality would help it. But it

has remarkable freshness throughout, for Mr. Coulter has used an immense variety of sources; and it is so comprehensive and so thorough that no reader can help being impressed by its solidity. Here are *all* the facts that are needed to understand the South in one of the most fateful periods of its history.

All the facts, that is, which concern the South as a separate section. We become aware in reading this book of some of the limitations of a purely sectional treatment; no doubt in subsequent volumes these limitations will be still more evident. At points it is hard to see the South clearly without seeing the North as well. In treating the political aspects of radical reconstruction, for example, Mr. Coulter needs to tell us something of sentiment in Pennsylvania and Illinois; in describing Southern cotton-manufacturing, he needs to give us a somewhat ampler background account of textile mills in New England. These limitations are unescapable, and it is a tribute to the author that we do not often feel them. Professor Coulter's volume worthily inaugurates an important historical series, in which the general public, as well as the student, should take a keen interest. His part of this new temple of Southern history is solidly and enduringly built. It has an interest of its own, too, for our generation caught in the wake of a great war. He demonstrates how rapidly some of the losses of a wasting conflict can be repaired, how quickly even a badly crushed people can rise again to its feet, how strong are the regenerative energies of society. A lesson of encouragement can be drawn from these balanced chapters.

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WORLD NOT ALL BAD

(*Continued from page 20*)

which saw the perfection of the airplane, the development of plastics, etc. And labor, then as now in unrest, had still to win the full extent of the powers it wielded by the time the Second World War broke out. Its status still engaged the sympathy of the generous young and fiction burgeoned into its proletarian phase.

Today there are new causes that enlist our youth. Their fathers fought for general principles, to make the world safe for democracy, to end war. The sons generalized less, for, faced with the monstrous possibilities of evil in human nature, they were first and foremost concerned with overthrowing an autocratic power such as the world had never known. They were doubtful even as they fought as to the elimination of future wars; all they knew was that to make life endurable the forces of evil must be overthrown. They were confronted with the shocking racial doctrines of Nazism and it was but natural that on their return they should examine the social inequities of their own land. Heirs of the frankness of speech which their fathers had won, they found a public ready to accept discussions of human conduct, of depravities and perversions, which would have been unthinkable even in 1920. They have differed from their elders in the focus of their attacks, and they have differed, too, in another way. For they, though like the earlier veterans full of remonstrance and wrath, yet write without the sweeping accusations that marked the earlier period. Their world is not all wrong and all irretrievable. It is, to be sure, punctuated with ill, but it is not the whole country they indict and deplore. They are crusaders, rather than satirists, and like all crusaders they march not only to overthrow but to win.

A. L.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 243

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 243 will be found in the next issue.

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(*Continued from page 8*)

anese who stubbornly refused to accept the expansionist and fascist conceptions that brought the nation to defeat and ruin. His heroine, sympathetically and charmingly delineated, had been educated in America, returned to Japan at the beginning of the attack on China. During the fatal progress to Pearl Harbor and beyond she is in deadly conflict with her family and her social class. It closes just before the American Army arrives with the ominous spectacle of a planned underground movement of resistance and reaction. It is the first authentic story of those gentler aspects of Japan that have won the admiration of countless Europeans and Americans since Lafcadio Hearn. It brings the reader again in touch with the Japanese love of beauty and cleanliness, their affection for the small and humble things in life, and their knowledge of how to alleviate their common poverty with the fragile and sensuous delicacy of their art and their customs. It is a long step and a welcome return from the ugly propaganda that pictured them as armed savages, half man, half ape. The novel is dramatic at the same time, for it reveals the depths to which Japan fell from grace and the enduring strength of the fascist theory of the master race.

Though Robert McLaughlin's "The Side of the Angels" represents the last year of the war, it belongs to the immediate present, for it is filled with the kind of controversy and bitterness that runs through American life today. Mr. McLaughlin, a free-lance writer who had been on the staff of *Time* before he got into uniform in 1942, had brought out a notable collection of short stories two years before his novel came out. "The Side of the Angels" brought him immediate recognition as a novelist. The conflict between two brothers, one an idealist with integrity, the other a clever opportunist, forms the background of the cold, peacetime war whose clamor is reflected in the class hatred and racial intolerance that have been the subject for many novels in the last year or so. The novel swarms with vivid and recognizable characters who speak with the living accents of the streets, the army camps, the bars, bedrooms, and cocktail lounges of the country. The author has been criticized for the fact that the brothers are painted black and white, the one an angel, the other a devil; but that is an aspect of life today that is obvious when both men and nations seems to be cleft in two, Communist and anti-Communist, peace and war, hatred and love. There can be no question that this mature writer has discovered, like Percy Winner, that the novel is a subtle and powerful weapon and that in his first attempt he has succeeded in writing a memorable book.

A. B. Guthrie's "The Big Sky" is an historical novel of the Oregon Country a century ago, though it has little relation to the conventional, popular historical romance. It tells the story of Boone Caudill, a typical frontiersman, who rode grimly at the head of a little column penetrating the wilds of Oregon in 1842. He appeared to be half wild; he dressed like an Indian, and knew the wilderness and the ways of animals and savage men. The author grew up in a Montana village and turned into a successful short-story writer. But his great theme, the frontier in the days when a man was free and the buffalo roamed the prairies, stayed in his mind. He started to write it four years ago and confesses that he lost thirty pounds before it was finished. The novel turned out to be skilful, finely and powerfully written. "The Big Sky" was perhaps the outstanding addition during the year to the literature of the vanished West.

Even critics and professors of English have stepped out of their robes to become novelists, in recognition of the significance of fiction in the modern world. Lionel Trilling, professor of English at Columbia, is both. His first novel, "The Middle of the Journey," is about what the reader who has known his previous work might expect of him; it is subtle, intelligent, urbane, and persuasive. Readers who had become accustomed to the noisy violence and neuroticism of so much of modern literature felt the same relief in listening to the arguments of his cultured protagonists that one experiences in coming from the crowded subway to a peaceful and rather elegant drawing-room. The characters, however, are not at peace with themselves or each other. Their spiritual and emotional tangles in the summer of 1930 reveal the ideas and intellectual interests common to the liberals of the time, weighed in the balance against their conscience and their intelligence. It is a novel in which conversation and inner thought are equally eloquent, for it concerns the intelligent and decent modern man whose passions are mainly intellectual. "The Middle of the Journey" was a calm interlude in the midst of last year's literary tumult.

There were other interludes. Three novels gave their readers a different sort of relief and revealed writers of considerable significance in a world that needs lightness and charm and occasional laughter. Robert Lewis Taylor's "Adrift in a Boneyard" is comedy, fantasy, and satire all in one. The boneyard is the world in which all but a few people have been killed by a sudden and murderous freak of the cosmos. The hero and his wife are a mild suburban couple, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, a modern version of our childhood favorites, the Swiss Family Robinson. There is a great deal of charming nonsense and fun in the book, since Mr. Robinson finds his role as the only adult male alive in America completely delightful and exciting. Anyone who wishes to see the A-bomb in the background is entitled to do so; for the average reader the

My Current Reading

Chat Paterson, who recently succeeded Charles Bolte as national chairman of the vigorous young American Veterans Committee, submits the following list of books he is now reading. It is interesting to note that two of the authors on Mr. Paterson's list—Cord Meyer, Jr., and Bill Mauldin—are themselves members of AVC.

PEACE OR ANARCHY, *by Cord Meyer, Jr. (Little, Brown)*

AN ESSAY ON MORALS, *by Philip Wylie (Rinehart)*

AMERICA IN MIDPASSAGE, *by Charles A. and Mary R. Beard (Macmillan)*

THE MACHIAVELLIANS, *by James Burnham (John Day)*

THE AGE OF JACKSON, *by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (Little, Brown)*

BACK HOME, *by Bill Mauldin (William Sloane Associates)*

TO SECURE THESE RIGHTS: THE REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS *(Simon & Schuster)*

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book was straight entertainment. Esther Carlsen's "The Moon Over the Back Fence" is still lighter, a charming fantasy of childhood, about a little girl and her summer with her fabulous Uncle George. Like Alice in her Victorian wonderland, it can be read by adult and child. The third fantastic satire or satirical fantasy was Herman Wouk's "Aurora Dawn." It is a satire both on the radio advertising and on Wakeman's fabulously successful "The Hucksters." The hero of Mr. Wouk's mad dream is an up-and-coming young man hired to advertise a pink soap originally called "Aurora." The villain of the piece is the head of the company, a stupid, arrogant old fool. A revivalist preacher is brought to New York with his rural sobbing penitents and hillbilly choir to bring God into the soap business. How it came about that he delivers his most violent sermon against advertising itself and what happened thereafter make up this highly amusing extravaganza. Esther Carlson obviously has more than one slim arrow to her bow and will certainly be heard from again; it may be somewhat doubtful if Robert Taylor or Herman Wouk can soon find subjects as fantastic and cataclysmic as their first novels revealed.

A BRIEF tribute must be paid to Gabrielle Roy's "The Tin Flute," though it is the work of a Canadian writer and should not strictly be listed among these American firsts. Miss Roy is of French-Canadian ancestry, and she has chosen the slums of the industrial section of Montreal for her tragedy of poverty and unemployment. The bittersweet love story of a girl eager for life and escape from sordid surroundings lends its charm and youthfulness to a novel whose realism and stark honesty might seem otherwise unendurable. Miss Roy is an artist who knows how to temper harshness with the touch of beauty and the boon of compassion; there is more than a trace of the earlier Willa Cather in her work.

The last of this series of first novels, "Knock on Any Door," by Willard Motley, can be labeled as social criticism of the highest order. There have been other books in which the enemy of society is presented as society's victim; few of them are as powerful and thorough a condemnation of the cities that permit the young Nick Romanos of the slums to become hardened criminals. Mr. Motley spent six years in writing a 500-page novel that was certainly one of the best and the most significant of the year. The story of the degradation of a vital boy, in this case the son of lower-middle class Italians, is only too familiar. Like so many from all our great cities, Nick plunged down the ladder, from the youthful incorrigible delinquent, to the petty criminal, to the pimp, dope-runner, and blackmailer, and finally murderer. His attempt to reform after marriage to a girl he loved was hopeless and futile, for the sense of guilt he felt when she committed suicide dragged him down still further. When he killed a policeman, the end was in sight. It took skill, endurance, and all the talents of the born novelist to make this long and familiar saga of degradation the compelling and powerful novel that it is. But the question may still rise in the reader's mind: Was this young life sacrificed and blasted by society or were the criminal instincts and the soil in which they grew an inseparable part of his nature, so that he was foredoomed in his cradle? But this is the unresolved and old battle between environment and heredity for which there is as yet no sure answer. There can be no doubt that Mr. Motley, the novelist, has given his own answer in convincing terms.

And so the wheel turns. While these first novelists and their books are drawn from last year's crop, already the new year has brought newer writers. Cyril Connolly, the English critic, saw little to commend in the literary scene or elsewhere when he returned from a visit to America. It would be only too easy to prove that he did not read as many books of our new writers as he might; though he has stirred up a minor controversy about young Truman Capote's first novel.

We are inured to English critics who do not like our customs or our literature, but it seems somehow presumptuous when Mr. Connolly called our attention to Truman Capote as the probable winner of the next year's literary sweepstakes before most of us had ever heard of him. The temptation to prove that Mr. Connolly didn't know what he was talking about disappears on reading "Other Voices, Other Rooms." Truman Capote is as promising a youngster as we have seen for many a month. He is both a realist and an imagist, who writes magnetic and lucid prose. Whether he will escape from the dark Southern morass in which his story of a degenerate family is embedded remains to be seen. A twenty-three-year-old, with a strain of Poe's old magic and gloomy overtones from William Faulkner, is a phenomenon worth studying. Certainly the publication in January of Capote's novel following after Ross Lockridge's "Raintree County" is an augury of great promise for the coming year.

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IMPORTANT PEOPLE

IN THE Children's Rooms of the public library here in New York it has been the custom for many years to celebrate February as the month of heroes, from the heroes of old epic tales to the "important people" of our day. It happened that 1947 was a year rich in biography for the older boys and girls. Months ago, we asked Ralph Adams Brown of Cortland College to read and evaluate for us some of the life stories of men and women who have advanced the cause of civilization in various ways—from Augustus in ancient Rome to the pioneers who fought their way across the continent of North America. The review of Mrs. Baker's "William the Silent" came from Blanche Shaffer in London.

MARY GOULD DAVIS.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR'S WORLD. Written and illustrated by Genevieve Foster. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 330 *pp.* $3.50.

Augustus was eighteen years old when, in 44 B.C., his uncle Julius Caesar was murdered. The next half century was to see world-shaking events. The boy Augustus became Emperor, ruler of the Western world. Significant changes took place in ways of living and of thinking. In a manger in Bethlehem was born a child who was to affect the whole course of world history. Miss Foster, author of "George Washington's World" and "Abraham Lincoln's World" has told in interesting detail the story of this complex period, so filled with unusual personalities.

In her story we can learn how people traveled, what food they ate, the clothes they wore, their thoughts, their faiths, the laws by which they were governed—all the aspects of life as it was lived two thousand years ago. Nor is it only the Roman world that is reviewed. China, India, Britain, Germany, France, and the Americas —civilization in all of these is weighed and considered. But it is the personalities that will stand out to young readers. Julius Caesar and Brutus, Antony, Cleopatra, Octavia and Agrippa, Cicero and Livy and Plato, Socrates and Octavian and Varus, Gamaliel and Herod and Saul of Tarsus—these are but few of the many who parade across these pages, often in brief but always in unforgettable characterizations. The maps, charts, and drawings are careful in design, generous in quantity, suggestive in character. This is, in every way, a beautiful and valuable book. It is a book to own, to "grow up with."

THE STORY OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE. By Phyllis Wynn Jackson. Portraits by Elliott Means. New York: Holiday House. 1947. 295 *pp.* $3.

At eleven Harriet Beecher was a thin, awkward child, immersed in her books when she was not called upon to tend her younger brothers. Possessed of a brilliant mind, she was still twice handicapped—first because she was a girl, then because she seemed to lack the color and drive of her older sisters. Great careers were planned for the Beecher boys, but for a time it seemed that Hattie would have little formal education. The family was poor and it was with difficulty that even the boys were sent to school. Finally Kate, the older sister, took Harriet into her school for girls. The very next year, fourteen-year-old Harriet was dutifully teaching moral philosophy in the school.

It was during a visit to the plantation home of a pupil that Harriet first saw the institution of slavery. Her father, Lyman Beecher, thundered against the rising tide of abolition, but Harriet found herself listening with a sympathetic ear to the pleas for freedom. Her marriage brought Harriet no relief from financial worry. Professor Calvin Stowe had been a brilliant student and was now a distinguished scholar, but he had trouble supporting his wife and their five children. Harriet supplemented their income by writing an occasional story or essay, by painting and—for a time—by running a private school. The whole question of slavery disturbed her. One day, as she sat in the First Parish Church in Brunswick, Maine, she had a vision of an old, ragged, white-haired slave being brutally flogged. That afternoon, on a piece of brown wrapping paper, she began her great novel. Her hope was to show the humane Southerners that slavery was wrong and thus bring about a gradual emancipation, an end to the bitter controversy between North and South. She was shocked to have her book branded as "incendiary literature." She was amazed to have it called a great novel. Without warning or preparation the most quiet and unassuming member of the Beecher family found herself famous on both sides of the Atlantic.

Miss Jackson has handled her material skilfully. The members of the Beecher family, and especially Harriet, come clearly into focus. This is fictionalized biography, but it is accurate and honest in the impression that it gives. For young people, and for their elders, it is good reading.

BORN TO ADVENTURE: The Story of John Charles Fremont. By Hildegarde Hawthorne. Illustrated by Bruce Adams. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1947. 230 *pp.* $2.75.

Miss Hawthorne, who has written a number of biographies for young people, tells here the story of one of the most romantic and colorful figures of nineteenth-century America. John Charles Fremont was the son of a French dancing master and teacher of languages. His mother was from an old Virginia family and, after the death of her young husband, had a hard time getting along. A friend paid Charles's way through a preparatory school, where he headed his classes in Greek and mathematics. He read widely in Latin and inherited his father's ability in languages. His mother hoped that her brilliant son would enter the ministry; instead he turned to teaching. Then he met Joel Roberts Poinsett, former minister to Mexico and Chile, and through his influence secured a professorship and

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an appointment to teach the sailors on a year-long cruise to South America. On his return Poinsett suggested that he help in the survey of the proposed Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad. In the wild country that the survey covered young Fremont joined for the first time that select group of scouts and explorers who mapped the Westward expansion of America. He shared in and then led several important expeditions into the then unknown West. He played an important role in winning California for the United States and was once its territorial governor. Before he was fifty he had been the first Republican candidate for the Presidency and a general in the Civil War. Fremont's life was filled with adventure, danger, and sudden changes of fortune. For his biographer there is a wealth of source material. Miss Hawthorne has made his story colorful and often exciting. The book has, however, two weaknesses. Its author is unfair in her characterization of some characters — Andrew Jackson, for example, and others of Fremont's enemies during the Civil War experiences—and she turns occasionally to invention in order to gain her effects, as in the opening incident. Young people are entitled to biographies that are accurate, as well as interesting.

WILLIAM THE SILENT. By Nina Brown Baker. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1947. 271 *pp.* $2.50.

Who would have thought that William, the handsome young nephew of the Emperor Charles, would in manhood become the liberator of the Netherlands? He was an "adept at the pretty courtesies and compliments that are routine in court life"; but his remarkable self-control in an important interview with the French king won him his nickname of "the Silent." How William, with his innate love for tolerance, became the soul of the Dutch rebellion against Spain is vividly and understandingly told. William was a courageous man of action, but was also very human and tender of heart, as his deep love for Charlotte of Bourbon testifies. He married her and, with his devotion, she won the affection of the Dutch people. Difficult years followed. Finally, banned as a traitor, William the patriot died, murdered by a fanatic. Thanks to his wise and unselfish planning, his people were ready now to rule themselves. William was declared "father of the fatherland, who valued the fortunes of the Netherlands above his own."

Interwoven with William's story is the great story of the sixteenth century. Hasn't the dramatic and moving struggle of the Netherlands inspired such giants as Goethe and Beethoven? Just as their Egmont is close to us today, so this story of William the Silent strikes surprisingly modern notes, reminding us of the Resistance movements of the Second World War. With Mrs. Baker's "Garibaldi" and "Peter the Great," this book makes thrilling reading. It is, too, an excellent reference book for young people who are studying history.

SKY PIONEERS: The Story of Igor I. Sikorsky. By Robert M. Bartlett. Illustrated with photographs. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 153 *pp.* $2.50.

Igor Sikorsky has had a varied and successful career in aviation. Born in

Russia, he had become famous as one of Russia's foremost aeronautical engineers before the First World War. He came to this country after the Russian Revolution, became an American citizen, and eventually reached a top position in our own aviation industry. He was one of the first designers to see the possibilities in large cargo planes. Of late years he has been concerned with the development of the helicopter—a type that he had experimented with as a young man in Russia.

Writing this biography with the approval and assistance of Igor Sikorsky, Mr. Bartlett has done an excellent job. Here is an interesting story of the rapid development of aviation. Here is the record of Mr. Sikorsky's thoughts of his adopted country. It is a book that will have a strong appeal to an air-minded generation.

BUCKSKIN BRIGADE. By Jim Kjelgaard. Illustrated by Ralph Ray, Jr. New York: Holiday House. 1947. 310 *pp.* $2.50.

In this book Jim Kjelgaard has used a unique device to tell a fascinating story of the "wood runners, rivermen, long hunters, scouts, fur traders, and mountain men" who "starved, froze, drowned, and were murdered by beast and Indian. But they lifted the veil of secrecy from the North American continent and showed other men the way to security, wealth, and fame." Thus he describes his Buckskin Brigade.

Ten short stories, all based upon historical fact and many containing historical characters, record the advance of this brigade from coast to coast. The stories are told in chronological order, from the first Breton fishermen to land on Cape Breton Island to the day in 1844 when old Jim Clyman rode out of Fort Bridger. Each story is prefaced by a very brief statement that places it in the proper historical perspective. Each story represents a different phase in the advance of the Buckskin Brigade. It would be difficult to select one as better than the others, but "Croatan," Jim Kjelgaard's explanation of what happened to Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony, is certainly most unusual.

Librarians and teachers of history, especially at the junior-high-school level, will find this a valuable book. It should appeal strongly to young people.

MARTHA WASHINGTON, GIRL OF OLD VIRGINIA. By Jean Brown Wagoner. Illustrated by Sandra James. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1947. 198 *pp.* $1.75.

The historical figure of Martha Washington romps gaily through the pages of this book. One learns to know well this Patsy, the little girl who asks many questions, who has a real live bear cub for a pet, who loves to garden and ride her pony. We learn to know the life of the plantation, the customs of the times and the Dundridge family. Here are dozens of incidents that illustrate the life a small girl might live on a Virginia plantation in the mid-eighteenth century. The family leaves Patsy behind on its annual trip to Williamsburg. While she and her cousins are alone with Mammy Tuck they are allowed to eat in the big kitchen, to pick geese, and hang the feathers in the attic. There they play hide-and-seek, and Patsy accidentally shuts herself into the gun room which was built to hold only muskets and powder.

This is a book for very young children and pays little attention to the adult Martha Dundridge Custis Washington. The author has concentrated on her childhood, and has woven into the story some fascinating details. One cannot help wondering how far it is safe to embroider fascinating detail into the lives of famous men and women. The child who is fed on a diet of fictionalized biography may well accumulate inaccurate impressions which might plague him in later years.

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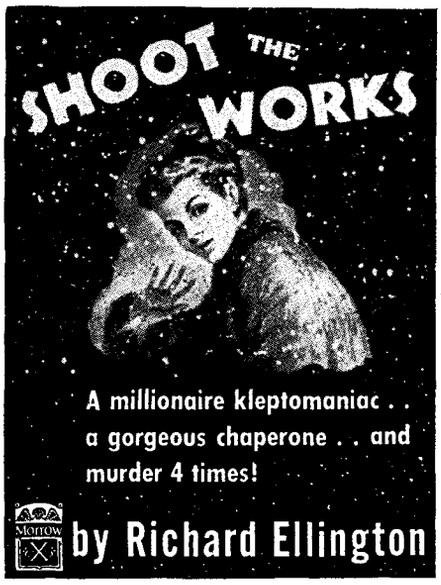

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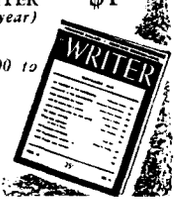

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Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE BLOW-TOP *Alvin Schwartz* (Dial: $2)	Sudden death of reefer-seller in Greenwich Village saloon mildly interests police and dislocates lives of pedlar's acquaintances.	"Routine" crime is basis of penetrating and well-written analysis of several depressing but amply realized characters, "artistic" and otherwise.	Impressive
ONE CORPSE MISSING *Z. H. Ross* (Bobbs-Merrill: $2.50)	Scared Nevada mine-heiress hires Reno private-eyes to investigate blots on dead husband's 'scutcheon—and fatalities begin at once.	Storm-isolated "ghost-town" prime setting for criminous actions of outspoken, well-lubricated, and suspicious crew of inimical fortune-hunters.	Good
CALL FOR THE SAINT *Leslie Charteris* (Crime Club: $2)	Chicago and Manhattan are scenes of two Saint stories now appearing in unabbreviated book form.	Racket "king" who preys on beggars and wicked manipulator of N. Y. prize fights effectively routed by resourceful Mr. Templar.	Time-passer
SHOOT THE WORKS *Richard Ellington* (Morrow: $2.50)	Private 'tec Drake, chaperoning psychotic Manhattan millionairess, probes her possibly murderous past and encounters fresh killings at home and in Florida.	Likable young sleuth emerges with slight scathe from deadly dealings with dipsos, epileptics, blackmailers, etc. Breezily written and popping with action.	Plenty tough
CARNACKI THE GHOST FINDER *William Hope Hodgson* (Mycroft & Moran: $3)	Nine stories about "psychic sleuth" and his dealings with spooks in England, Ireland, and on high seas.	Carnacki's exploits with *real* ha'nts better than his "ghost breaking." Stories vary in merit but general effect is amply shivery.	For the shudder-shelf
SUDDEN FEAR *Edna Sherry* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50)	Wealthy middle-aged dramatist discovers her handsome young husband and her blonde protégeé are plotting her "accidental" death. She takes steps.	Absorbing portrayal of terrified but resourceful woman's destruction of clumsy conspirators. Suspense at concert pitch right up to last line.	Good melo-drama
DEVIL IN THE SKY *Muriel Bradley* (Crime Club: $2)	Calif. advt.-exec., at mountain ranch to settle estate of brother killed in skiing "accident," finds another corpse and scents evil.	Attractive setting, sundry interesting people, adequate action, rudimentary detecting, and fiery climax that finishes both slayer and story.	Passable
DRINK THE GREEN WATER *Hugh Austin* (Scribner's: $2.50)	Manhattan counselor-at-law Sultan, dignified but unpredictable, meets murders on Long Island, where adoring female office-help complicate matters.	Possible over-complications of plot dispelled by sharp jibes at legal mustiness and effervescence of three charmers, who make things hum.	Diverting
MY SISTER, GOODNIGHT *Gordon McDonnell* (Little, Brown: $2.50)	Marine major finds beautiful dead unknown on Calif. road, delivers corpse to cops, and plunges into case with many ramifications.	Highly-strung leather-neck-narrator and chilly policeman dominate realistic yarn. Murderer's identity not unguessable, but pursuit has many exciting moments.	Good grade
FATAL STEP *Wade Miller* (Farrar, Straus: $2.50)	From San Diego amusement park "loop-o-plane" private 'tec Mark Thursday sees client murdered. Others exit before Thursday erases slippery criminal.	Noteworthy as presentation of shamus both tough and credible. Pace brisk, solution explosive, people effective—especially hard-boiled newspaper gal.	High-bracket toughun

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The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT
	Recording Technique	*Surface*	
BACH. SONATAS FOR VIOLIN AND KEYBOARD. Alexander Schneider, violin; Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord. Columbia MM 719 (14) *(two volumes)*	Perhaps recorded at same time as these artists' Mozart album (C M 650), but seems improved. Better sense of liveness, esp. in violin. Lower level, but better high tones. Less bass in harps. Bach is more phonogenic in any case for this combination of instruments.	A to A+	(See below.) A very satisfactory and most welcome set of albums. Unlike Mozart album, same players, there are no doubts here as to suitability of harps. This is as the music should be. It comes over more effectively than in any piano version, too. A big step in naturalizing the harpsichord in music where it belongs.
HANDEL, WATER MUSIC SUITE (ARR. HARTY.) London Philharmonic, Basil Cameron. Decca London EDA 38(2) *Comparison*: (Same score) London Philharmonic, Harty. Columbia X 13 (2) *(Still available)*	One of the landmarks of pre-war recording is "replaced"—but I like the old one better. The new ffrr recording is too live for this music. Old set has more natural brilliance, in spite of missing highs. Acoustically it can't be beat.	A— (A)	There have been other transcriptions — Harty's is the best. His own reading easily surpasses the new Cameron one. Cameron is tubby, heavy-footed. Harty's is light, sharp, rhythmic. It'd be nice if someone (post-ban) recorded more "Water Music" (over 20 mvts. to choose) and in original scoring.

THE TEAMWORK TEMPERAMENT

TWO YEARS ago (*SRL* Mar. 30, 1946) this column expressed doubt as to the advisability of a close collaboration among super stars of music—the instance being a Bach sonata for violin and harpsichord played by Wanda Landowska and Yehudi Menuhin (Victor M 1035). It is easy to assume in such cases that two are better than one, that a concatenation of stellar material of this sort is, like some conjunction of the planets, an occasion for awe and rejoicing. I was not able to rejoice. Landowska, as was then pointed out, is one of those extraordinary artists, unique and inimitable, who "can rise above and beyond their instrument and possibly beyond any previously conceivable interpretation of the mere music composed for it." By this token her interpretations are great but in a sense eccentric and even false to music written for the playing of ordinary fine musicians. No matter, when she plays solo. Then she is superb. But in ensemble work Landowska, knowing that "eccentricity" is uncalled for, is at a loss. Menuhin too, a Romantic with an awesome admiration for the classics, is ill at ease in the simpler Bach. There is unwonted restraint and artificiality in the cooperation between these artists, an uncomfortable air of sweetness and light that merely emphasizes the impossibility of the situation.

But the great solo players, though the best known, are certainly not the only first-rate performers. Every fine performer is a soloist, of course; but there are those who temperamentally can give of their best in the form of perfect teamwork. Ralph Kirkpatrick is surely one. Alexander Schneider, once of the Budapest Quartet, is another. Now come the two volumes of Bach sonatas (above) and among them the very sonata in E which Landowska and Menuhin played. The contrast is immediate. Here we feel the presence, not of two overwhelming musical personalities but of one, and that a direct and wholly natural one—Bach. There is nothing simple about Bach; neither is there affectation or restraint. Bach's speech, to himself, was entirely direct. To us, in these performances, it is also direct, and the few minor difficulties with the balance in the recording, with the excess power of the modern violin, are scarcely disturbing. This is Bach naturally, authentically played, in the original as nearly as we today can conceive it.

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MURMURS FROM THE LOYAL OPPOSITION

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.
Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art:
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

I FAIL to find much trace of candor
In these remarks by Mr. Landor:
He had a temper blazing hot
And strove with dozens, worthy or not;
The record, at one time, discloses
He threw his butler in the roses.
As for his statement from the heart
That he was ready to depart,
Internal evidence will show
It took him ten more years to go.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,
The desire of the moth for the star? . . .
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

"What men call love" was not the dish,
Apparently, of Percy Bysshe,
But since we find him doubly wed
I wonder what he gave instead?
I've always felt, in spite of Plato,
That Shelley was a hot potato;
As warm as Keats's love for Fanny
Was Shelley's yen for Viviani;
And 'round his feet four children play,
By various wives. Some moth, I'd say.

"A poem should not mean, but be."
ARCHIBALD MACLEISH.

I think that I have never seen
A proper poem that does not mean,
Though there are times when one is not
Perhaps exactly certain *what*.
These times occur, to my dismay,
With growing frequency today:
Too prevalent, in fact, by far
Are poems that neither mean, nor are.
NORMAN R. JAFFRAY.

* * *

I am glad to present the following idea from Mrs. Mary Moon of San Diego, Calif.:

> Why doesn't someone start a poetry-book-of-the-month club? That at least would get into our hands every month one book of today's poetry, a volume selected by three or four competent judges. It would keep us informed of the trend in modern poetical expression. It certainly would help increase the sale of books of poetry, and thus would help poets who have arrived, as well as those who have not. And the "have nots" (as you know editorially) are as numerous as *grains of sand*. . . . Think of each "grain" a potential poetry book-club member! Why hasn't some far-sighted publisher, loaded with copies of unsold good poetry books, thought of this? But actually books should not be drawn from one publisher, but from all. Think of the enormous stimulus! Publishers would be glad (?) to publish poetry hoping that they might bring forth a golden egg that M-G-M would sit on for $150,000. This endeavor of organizing a poetry book club would have to be started by poetry-minded people, but I firmly believe that our practical-minded brothers would be happy to further the project if its merits were presented.

* * *

CAMPAIGN SONG ABLY ABETTED BY LONGFELLOW

Between the dark and the spotlight,
Where the votes are beginning to flower,
Comes a pause and a preoccupation
That is known as the Eisenhower.

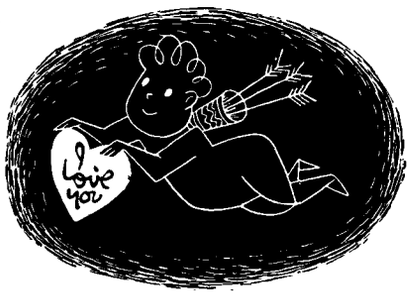
I hear on the platforms around me
The clatter of running feet,
The sound of campaigns that are opened
With voices far from sweet.

Then visions I see in the lamplight:
Invading my peaceful lair
Grave Thomas and smiling Harry,
And Robt. with thinning hair.

I see the crusading Henry,
And Harold's earnest eyes,
And Earl—they are planning to take me—
A logical surmise.

They almost devour me with speeches,
Their phrases about me entwine
Till I envy the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Yet think you, O fire-eyed canditti,
Because of your verbal brawl,
Such a seasoned old poll cat as I am
Does not approve of it all?



Tut, tut. I prefer this commotion
To the tactics I disdain:
Far better the noisy polemics
Than a whispering campaign.
DAVID STERN.

* * *

STATISTICS FOR FEBRUARY 14TH

On this the day of Cupid and his Dart, let
Me cite apt statistics from John Bartlett:
In his book* quoting from the all-time great,
There are but fifteen references to *hate*,
While there are above
Four hundred to *love*.
A. S. FLAUMENHAFT.

**Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations," Tenth Edition.*

* * *

In reply to my recent inquiry concerning "Gretna Green" I have received the following. I hope for her recovery, and send her THE NEST'S very best!

GREETING!

I am dying, Phoenix, dying
To write verse as in the past,
But the sulfa drugs *et cetera*
All poetic frenzy blast,
As dire viruses invade me.
So, although my spirit's willin',
I must let the Muse upbraid me,
I'm too full of penicillin!
GRETNA GREEN.

* * *

CROSSING THE BAR

Written in a copy of "More Songs from Vagabondia" now in Vassar College Library

Sunset and good cigar,
And a great thirst on me;
And may my friends be loafing at the bar
When I go in to see.

Not such a crowd as laughing seems to weep,
Too full to move or roam;
But fellows who will put me safe to sleep
When I go home.

Midnight and potent smell,
And after that some doubt;
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I go out.

For though within this bright seductive place
My dollars go not far,
I never more shall see them face to face,
When they have crossed the bar!
BLISS CARMAN.

* * *

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 725

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

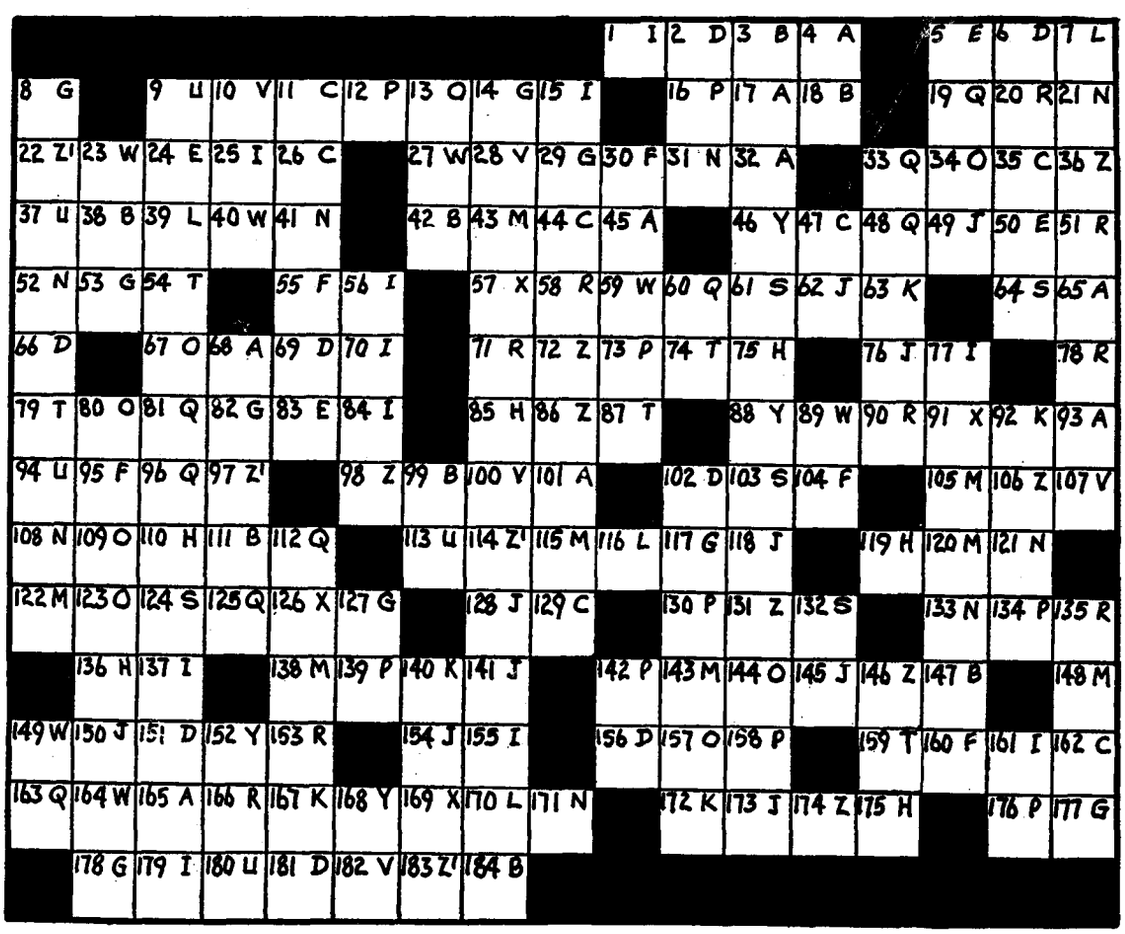
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Great Persian epic by Firdausi.	32 4 165 17 65 93 45 68 101
B. Clouded with blackish color, as if with smoke (zool.).	99 147 42 38 184 111 3 18
C. To make an appeal, application or the like, as for a rehearing (2 wds.).	26 11 162 47 129 44 35
D. Early colonial governor of Massachusetts, repeatedly (1589?-1665).	181 151 66 2 69 6 102 156
E. North European capital.	83 5 24 50
F. Saltpeter.	30 95 55 104 160
G. Manufacturing city in Yorkshire, England.	53 127 8 178 177 29 14 117 82
H. Crude native borax, formerly imported from Tibet.	119 136 75 110 85 175
I. Series of great quartets by Beethoven, named for Russian ambassador.	179 161 137 56 25 84 77 1 15 70 155
J. To the limit; deeply involved (4 wds.).	173 49 141 128 76 145 118 62 150 154
K. Active, brisk, vigorous; said of air, liquor, etc.	92 167 140 172 63
L. Coarse hominy (U. S.).	39 170 7 116
M. Turnip-shaped fleshy cabbage, eaten like cauliflower.	138 115 120 122 43 105 148 143

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
N. American novel of the South (Pulitzer Prize, 1939; with "The").	41 121 133 108 171 52 21 31
O. A censer (eccl.).	144 157 34 80 109 67 13 123
P. Popular title for an English pamphleteer (1580-1653; 2 wds.).	142 73 16 158 134 12 176 139 130
Q. Progeny.	96 33 81 48 19 60 163 112 125
R. Pair of instruments, often used to accompany dancing.	135 71 153 51 90 58 20 166 78
S. Stage marked by the retreat of the Pleistocene glaciers (geol.).	64 61 103 132 124
T. A very small gnat or fly.	54 74 87 159 79
U. An initiate in the highest Eleusinian mysteries (Gr. antiq.).	180 9 37 113 94
V. British sculptor of Scottish ancestry (famed works in Brit. Commonwealth).	100 28 10 107 182
W. To survive.	149 23 89 40 59 27 164
X. Dynasty in Chinese history, A.D. 618-907, golden age of poetry and arts.	126 57 169 91
Y. Inequality.	168 46 152 88
Z. A weak, childish person; a child.	98 131 146 106 174 36 86 72
Z'. The joint of a stem (bot.).	97 183 22 114

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 18 of this issue.

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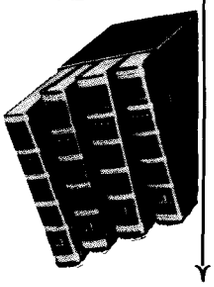

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☐ Red Plush—Guy McCrone	☐
☐ A Study of History—Arnold J. Toynbee	☐
☐ Gus the Great—Thomas W. Duncan	☐
☐ The Moneyman—Thomas B. Costain	☐
☐ The Story of Mrs. Murphy —Natalie Anderson Scott	☐
☐ The Proper Bostonians —Cleveland Amory	☐
☐ Gentleman's Agreement —Laura Z. Hobson	☐
☐ Human Destiny—Lecomte du Noüy	☐
☐ The James Family—F. O. Matthiessen	☐
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☐ When the Mountain Fell —Charles Ferdinand Ramuz	☐
☐ The Professor's Umbrella —Mary Jane Ward	☐
☐ The Saxon Charm—Frederic Wakeman	☐

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☐ East River—Sholem Asch	☐
☐ The Lincoln Reader—Paul M. Angle	☐
☐ Back Home—Bill Mauldin	☐
☐ Three Came Home —Agnes Newton Keith	☐
☐ The Wayward Bus—John Steinbeck	☐
☐ The Hucksters—Frederic Wakeman	☐
☐ Alexandra—Gladys Schmitt	☐
☐ Christ Stopped at Eboli—Carlo Levi	☐
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